

# BRAVE AND BOLD

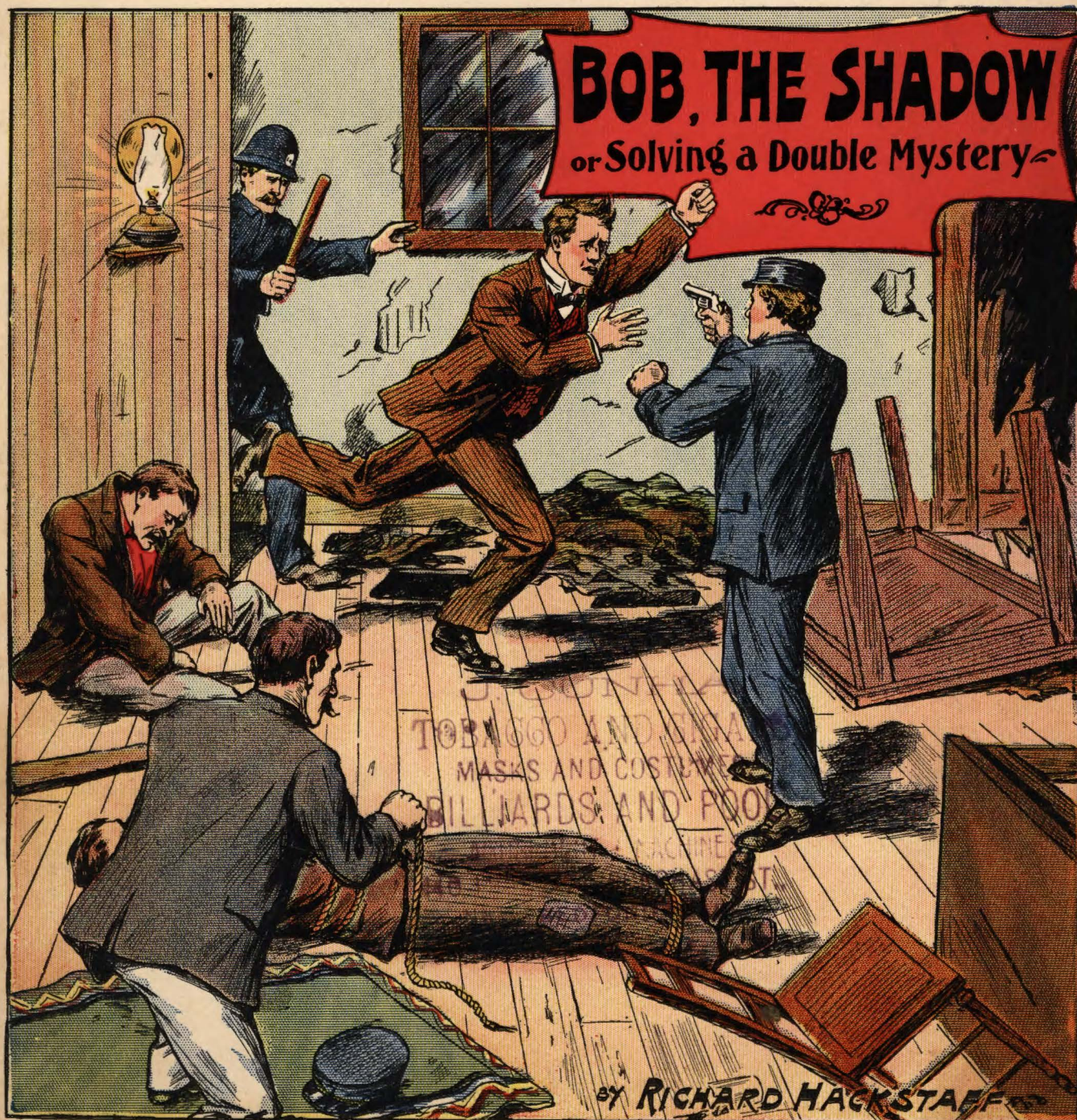
A DIFFERENT COMPLETE STORY EVERY WEEK

*Issued Weekly. By subscription \$2.50 per year. Entered according to Act of Congress in the year 1906, in the Office of the Librarian of Congress, Washington, D. C. by STREET & SMITH, 79-89 Seventh Avenue, New York, N. Y.*

No. 199

NEW YORK, OCTOBER 13, 1906.

Price, Five Cents



A step sounded on the stairs and a man bounded around the partition. "Halt!" cried the young detective, and Loven Edmunds looked into the barrel of Bob's revolver.



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## BOB, THE SHADOW

OR,

### SOLVING A DOUBLE MYSTERY.

By RICHARD HACKSTAFF.

#### CHAPTER I.

##### A NEW RECRUIT.

The chief of the Chicago police was seated in his office. There was a frown upon his face, for the clever man was deep in a great mystery.

So many cases requiring his help had been reported that the whole department was on the jump.

There was one crime in particular that was worrying him greatly.

This was the murder of a young girl who was working as stenographer and typewriter for a firm of real-estate brokers.

She had been found dead at her desk, with her head resting upon her typewriting-machine.

The office boy had discovered her when he opened the place at seven-thirty in the morning.

The strangest thing about the case was that the murderer had left no clue. Not a person could be found who seemed in any way guilty.

She was a plain-looking girl of sixteen, who still wore short skirts and her hair in a braid down her back. Up to the day of her death no one had given her much attention.

Another strange thing about the case was this.

No one, not even the coroner, could tell at first how death had come to her.

There were no marks upon her body to indicate violence.

At the post-mortem, however, that part was explained. The condition of the lungs showed that she had been suffocated. By what or by whom no one could determine. Every employee in the office had been questioned in vain.

They were all able to prove their absence from the place at the hour of the murder, which the physicians stated must have occurred between six and seven o'clock in the evening. They were able to tell this by the condition of the body.

The janitor was the last one who had seen her. He had heard the clicking of her machine and had seen her sitting at it working when he passed the office door.

That was just before six o'clock, as he went to his supper. From then on all was mystery.

The young girl had stayed late, to complete some work, and upon her machine was an unfinished letter.

The chief had been puzzling over the case day and night since it was reported. It was no wonder that he looked troubled and discouraged.

At that moment a clerk stuck his head into the office.

"Here's a boy to see you, sir!" he said, a bit curiously.

The chief swung around in his chair. A boy of sixteen had entered the office, and stood, cap in hand, staring at the great criminal-catcher.

"So you wish to be a detective?"

The chief spoke kindly.

"What can you do, young man? Your employer says in his letter that you are very clever."

He picked up a letter that was lying upon his desk. It was from the head of one of the largest dry-goods houses in Chicago.

"I can shadow, sir! There can't any one beat me at shadowing, you bet! Why, I can step so light that watch-dogs can't hear me, and I can rob a hen-roost without waking the rooster!"

"Did you ever try?"

The chief's eyes twinkled merrily.

"Yes, sir, for fun! I wouldn't do it, though, for any other reason."

"Let's see, what's your name?"

The chief glanced at the letter.

"Bob Lightfoot, sir. That's what they call me, because I'm the stillest thing that ever happened."

"You ought to be a good shadow with a name like that," was the answer.

The chief was never averse to a joke, when he knew it to be innocent.

"And I can talk Injun, Chineese, Dutch, dago, or any old thing," went on the boy quickly. "I can box, sprint, slug, ride a wheel, horse, street-car, donkey, or would tackle an automobile. There ain't any game that can bluff me, sir! I'll be in at the death, no matter what happens!"

"I am inclined to believe you. But go on, young man."



What other talents do you possess that will convince me that you are made of the right stuff to be a detective?"

The great sleuth leaned back in his chair and waited for an answer.

The lad gave a quick glance around the office, then his big black eyes flew open, and he began to stare at a closet door in the corner.

The next minute a negro's voice could be heard inside the closet.

"Lemme outer hyar, boss! I ain't done nothin'! Fo' de Lawd, I ain't, boss, an' dat's de gospel truth! Lemme outer dis hole fo' I dun kick de bucket!"

The chief jumped to his feet. His eyes were fairly bulging.

To the best of his knowledge there was no one in the closet.

He opened the door as quickly as he could. There was nothing there but a lot of old papers and a few old traps that belonged to his men.

Yet he had heard the voice distinctly.

He turned and looked at Bob.

There was not a smile on the boy's face. He stared back at the chief, and even peered into the closet.

"That's strange," muttered the chief, going back to his desk. "I heard a voice distinctly, and it sounded exactly as if it was in that closet."

"Ha! ha! ha! Faith, it's quare ears that ye do be havin', be jabbers!" bawled another voice.

This time the words came from the little safe by the window.

The chief looked puzzled, but only for a minute.

He was too shrewd a man to be kept guessing very long. In a moment more he burst out laughing.

"Well done, my boy! You are a clever ventriloquist, I see! Well, that may help you, and it may not; I can hardly tell. Now, then, what else can you do? You seem wonderfully smart."

Bob Lightfoot took a sharp look around the office.

The next second he whipped off his coat and turned it inside out. Then his cap underwent the same operation. He pulled an old silk handkerchief from one of his pockets. In the twinkling of an eye he had changed his entire appearance.

Only an experienced eye would ever have known him.

When he entered the office he was a good-looking, athletic lad, dressed in a neat blue suit, a tidy collar, and a military cap with a gold cord and buttons.

Now he walked with a limp, and his coat and cap were ragged. They looked like garments that had come from the rag-pickers. The old handkerchief about his neck helped out the costume. A squint in one eye disfigured him completely.

The chief patted him on the shoulder.

"That is first-rate for a beginning."

"And you'll take me, sir?" asked Bob, shifting his clothing back.

"Yes, I'll take you."

The chief went back to his desk as he spoke.

He was satisfied that he had found a prize in Bob.

"See here!"

He held up a scrap of paper, and in an instant Bob was all attention.

"Do you read the papers, Bob?"

"Sure! Every blooming one of 'em!"

"Then you saw this?"

He handed Bob the scrap of paper.

"The robbery in the Teller Building; yes, I saw it, sir. A cool thirty thousand in cash and diamonds swiped from the safe after business hours. Why, it's most a week old! Gee! They must have had a lot of dandy detectives!"

The chief smiled grimly.

He had two of his best men on the case. Van Camp & Dudley were well-known diamond importers. They had been

urging him to do his best to catch the culprits, but thus far the rascals had outwitted the police completely.

"I'll put you on it, Bob."

"All right, sir!"

"You can go to Mr. Van Camp. I'll give you a note to him. No doubt he will make a pretense of hiring you to work in his office. Naturally, he is even more anxious about the matter than I am. If he decides to take you it will be for just one thing. You are to keep your eyes and ears open as you mingle with his employees. If you find a clue you are to report to me at once. When will you be ready to go on duty?"

"I am ready now, sir."

Bob fingered his cap as he spoke. He was like a war-horse, snuffing smoke, eager and ready for the battle.

The chief gave him another look from head to foot. Then he proceeded to ask him a few necessary questions.

"How old are you?"

"Sixteen."

"Any parents?"

"No, sir."

"Brothers and sisters?"

"No, sir. I'm the only one left. My folks were all killed in the flood down in Texas last summer."

"Poor boy, I pity you! You are indeed unfortunate! I am glad you came to me. I may be able to protect you."

"Thank you, sir!"

Bob spoke feelingly. There were tears in his eyes. He brushed them away quickly, so the chief would not see them.

"I will write the note at once. There is no time to lose!"

The chief turned to his desk as he spoke, and began looking for a sheet of paper. There was a tap on the door and a detective entered.

"Well, Decker?"

The chief swung around in his chair as he spoke, and Bob could see at a glance that he expected some important information.

## CHAPTER II.

### THE CLUE.

Decker shook his head.

He was one of the oldest men on the force.

Next to the great chief himself, he was the ablest criminal-catcher in the metropolis of the West. There was not a rogue east of the Rockies who did not fear him, and his exploits had even reached the Pacific slope. In fact, there was hardly a State in the Union that he had not covered.

As he entered his superior's presence he took a sharp look at Bob, and then shifted his eyes toward the chief uneasily.

"The boy is safe. He is one of us," said the chief quickly.

"He is the boy that Mr. Denham, the merchant, recommended. He has a record already for catching tricky employees and shoplifters in Denham's store. I have just put him to work on the recent robbery."

"You mean the one at Van Camp & Dudley's!" said the man quickly. "There's nothing new in that quarter, then! Well, I wish while you are about it you'd put some one to work on that Dearborn Street murder, too, chief! I'm balked completely! I can't find head nor tail to it!"

Bob opened his big black eyes, but did not say a word.

He knew enough to be silent in the presence of his superiors, or anywhere else, for that matter.

"You have found no clue?"

The chief spoke impatiently.

"Not a sign of one. That girl was suffocated while at her work in one of the private offices. That is what the coroner told me at the start, and I have got no further. I never saw anything so shrouded in mystery before. Why, there isn't so much as a hint at a motive!"

"That's the strange thing about it. Who would dream of



killing a poor young girl unless she happened to be in the way? But after she was dead, why did they not go and rob the safe? The brokers, Lee & Phillips, who occupy the office, claim that there were ten thousand dollars in cash in it, as well as double that amount in easily negotiable paper."

Decker shook his head. Just then the bell on the chief's private telephone sounded.

"The chief of police of Denver wants you, sir," said the telephone attendant.

The chief went to the phone and held a short conversation.

When he came back there was a grim smile upon his features.

"A warning to look out for Bill Hyson, 'the Prairie-dog,' and Mike Maloney, two members of the 'Ten Threes,'" he said, with a glance at Decker. "The chief at Denver says they are in our city at present."

"Did he say how long they had been here?"

The chief shook his head. Then the two men stared at each other.

"Let's see! That murder is a week old, Decker."

"Yes, and the robbery five days. They are very near each other. Besides, there was a safe opened in the Bellows Building on Wabash Avenue last night. One of the agencies has the job, but I saw it in the papers."

"If the 'Ten Threes' are represented here I can understand them all. The members of that gang are experts at everything. They have no limit to their territory. They work from the Atlantic to the Pacific."

Bob listened eagerly. He had never heard of the "Ten Threes." He did not venture to ask a question, however. For a boy of his age he was very wise indeed. He knew that it was the duty of a detective to listen quietly to his instructions. It was a breach of discipline to ask questions.

"I'll put Bob on the robbery first and see how he comes out," said the chief. "A boy may catch things where a man would only arouse suspicion. If he proves himself equal to that case I may try him on the murder."

Bob was fingering his cap nervously. As the chief stopped talking he glanced at him. In an instant he saw that Bob had something to say.

"What is it, Bob?"

He asked the question almost eagerly. As the boy replied the two great detectives were silent.

"I think I know something about that murder in the broker's office, sir. I've got a clue, and a bully one, too! There's a woman in that office that used to be a crook. Her name is Evelyn Mason, and she's their bookkeeper at present."

The chief sprang to his feet.

"Are you sure of that, Bob?"

Bob grinned with delight as he nodded his head.

"You bet I'm sure, and I'll tell you why. I caught a woman swiping things in the store one day nearly two years ago. If it hadn't been for Mr. Denham she'd have been sent up. He weakened when she cried, and let her off. Only last week I saw her on the street. Now, what do you think I found when I trailed her home? She's doing the bookkeeping act in that very office. That's how I came to think I had a clue when I read of the murder."

The chief looked thoughtful.

The lad's story was worth remembering. People who commit one crime are more liable to commit another than those who have always lived lives of virtue.

Still there was a wide difference between shoplifting and murder. Hundreds of people do one who would never dream of doing the other.

"What did you find out about this woman?" asked the chief of Decker.

The detective drew a note-book from his pocket and glanced it over.

"She is Evelyn Mason, all right. She is twenty-five years old and was born in Denver. Has been in Chicago only a year, so Bob must be mistaken."

"I'm not. I'd know her anywhere!" was the boy's prompt answer.

"Go on! What else?" asked the chief impatiently.

"She is a stranger to Lee & Phillips. Has been with them only two months. Came through an advertisement, but brought very good references. I did not look into them when they assured me that they trusted her."

"Watch her!"

The chief spoke grimly and Decker nodded. He knew the great man too well not to respect his orders.

"See where she lives and how she lives. It will do no harm. The woman may have been crooked and reformed. It will be doing her a favor to prove her innocence."

Decker nodded again and scribbled a few words in his note-book.

He did not believe that Miss Mason was in any way interested in the murder. He was far too wise, however, to let his personal beliefs influence him. All the thinking he could do would not alter the facts in the case. He did not stake everything on intuitions, as did many of his companions.

"We may be on the right track; I don't know."

The chief spoke calmly.

"Anyway, I congratulate you, Bob. You have a good memory and a good eye for faces. It isn't every boy that would remember a thing like that. We'll look into your clue and see where it leads us."

Bob's face took on a modest look.

"I know lots of them, chief; thieves, I mean! But, gee! Wouldn't I like to hunt a murderer!"

"You may have a chance to try your skill in that direction, also," remarked the chief smilingly.

Then he gave him a few valuable instructions.

Five minutes later the boy had left the office, and the two shrewd detectives were staring at each other.

### CHAPTER III.

#### THE CONNECTING-LINK.

When Bob left the office of the chief, he went straight to the handsome building where the diamond importers, Van Camp & Dudley, occupied spacious offices.

He presented his letter to Mr. Van Camp himself, and in less than an hour he was installed in the office. His duties, as far as any one knew, were to run errands for his employers, attend the telephone, dust the rooms, and make himself generally useful to the other employees.

In reality he was to spy on his companions and learn what he could of their habits.

This was as much to prove their innocence as their guilt, so the youthful detective did not object to it.

Bob saw in a minute that his was not an easy position.

Ted Tracy, another boy, was discharged to make room for him. He gave him some ugly looks, and the head clerk, Mr. Travers, scowled at him persistently.

"I'll win 'em over! I've got to," whispered Bob to himself. Then he set to work to be agreeable to every one.

He knew this was the surest way to accomplish his end.

In less than an hour they were all talking about the robbery, and Bob was able to pick up a few scraps of information.

"Thirty thousand doesn't grow on every bush," remarked one of the typewriter girls to Travers. "Whoever took that prize was in great luck. And he's out of harm's way now, you bet! The detectives will never catch him."

"He has a good start. He'd be a chump to get caught now, whoever he is," laughed Travers. "It's a pity, though, that it happened when the firm was so short. A couple more hauls like that would send them to the bottom."

"And that would mean that we'd all be on our uppers, and, goodness knows, we are bad enough off now, with Van Camp eternally cutting our salaries."

"He's a miser, I believe," said the head clerk softly; "but, gee! where would I be if he heard me say it!"



"Better go easy until you know what the new boy is like. He looks all right, but you never can tell. Some boys do nothing from morning until night but tattle."

A gentleman came in just then, and Bob had to take his card to the private office.

When he returned he found that the clerks had changed the conversation.

The day wore away without any one referring to the robbery again, and by five o'clock the outer office was empty. Mr. Van Camp alone remained in the inner office.

Bob was just about to go in to ask if he might go home when the office door opened and a well-dressed man entered.

The moment Bob saw him his eyes flew open. He had hard work to keep himself from letting forth a whistle of astonishment.

But his wits were with him, so he rose politely.

Five minutes later the caller was closeted with Mr. Van Camp, and Bob was back at his desk, trying to think what to do.

He was sure as he could be that he ought to do something.

Before he had decided what it should be, the office door opened and he heard a word of conversation.

"You understand—it is not transferable."

"I understand. Never fear, I shall not transfer it."

There was a curious chuckle and Bob looked up quickly. He was in time to see a meaning glance exchanged between the caller and his employer.

In a second he made believe that he was carefully examining the gold braid on his cap.

They did not dream that he was listening.

Mr. Van Camp went back to his office and the stranger went out.

Bob did not wait for permission, but darted after him.

When he reached the street he was still behind him.

There was something about the man that had aroused his suspicions. It was this:

The man was a stranger to him, yet he had a familiar face. There was a triangular scar just at the corner of one eyebrow.

Bob did a lot of thinking as he walked along, but no one would have thought it to have looked at him.

He stared into the shop-windows and whistled merrily. When he did glance ahead at his "quarry," he showed no interest whatever.

A brisk walk of five minutes brought them to one of the railroad stations, and Bob saw the man enter one of the private offices of the company. He waited a minute longer until he came out.

He had changed his attire for a conductor's uniform.

Bob passed him twice and got his appearance fixed firmly in his mind, and noted a few things about him that he thought might be useful.

When he finally left his man he ran around to headquarters and found the chief busily engaged in his office.

He looked up as Bob entered and gave him a smile.

Bob pulled off his cap and saluted respectfully; then he made his errand known in a businesslike manner.

"Can I see a picture of Number 4092, Rogues' Gallery? I mean a genuine picture, not the one that was printed last month when they nabbed him on suspicion of robbing that lady at the Palmer House."

The chief tapped his bell and then smiled again.

"I see that you do read the papers, Bob, and I am glad you do. A knowledge of one criminal often helps in finding another. It's a pity we had to let that fellow go. I still believe he was guilty, but there was nothing to prove it."

"And didn't he skedaddle? Now, where do you suppose he went to, chief? Made tracks from Chicago, of course. Don't you think so?"

The chief shook his head, and just then one of the detectives came in.

"Get me a picture of 'Alibi Job, Number 4092," he said to the man; then turned to Bob.

"The evidence would not hold him in that case, so we had to let him go, and there isn't a doubt in my mind but what he left Chicago. Still, that isn't saying that he won't come back. Job is a clever fellow, who can fill almost any position. That is what makes him so hard to catch, and so hard to hold after you catch him. I gave him his nickname ten years ago. He is the cleverest rogue I ever saw at proving an alibi. But what do you want of his picture, Bob? Surely Alibi Job has nothing to do with the robbery in your employer's office! He would have cracked the safe, and that did not happen. Whoever took that money was either an expert or knew the combination."

Bob started to answer, and then changed his mind. If he was on the wrong track he did not wish the chief to know it.

"There's the picture, my boy. Now, go ahead and work out your own theories. Of course, I'd like to know what you have up your sleeve, but the best way to learn your ability is to let you go on in your own way, only don't keep me waiting if you have really found something."

Bob saluted again.

"I may be wrong," he said, as he studied the picture. "I'll be back to-night and tell you what tree I'm barking up, chief."

He darted out of the office before the chief could stop him and hurried back toward his employer's offices.

It was nearly six o'clock.

He wondered if Mr. Van Camp would still be there.

It was very doubtful, but he decided to go and see, at any rate.

As he hurried on he was thinking of the chief's words.

"He won't prove an alibi this time, if I can help it," he muttered. "I've got him located, and now I've got something else to do. What in thunder does he want at Van Camp & Dudley's offices? It looks mighty suspicious, according to my way of thinking. My employers, or one of them, at least, is keeping bad company."

Just before he reached the building he took a final look at the picture. Then he removed his cap and hid it in the lining.

"That double-decker is a great scheme!"

He looked at the cap admiringly.

"There's nobody living would find it there! 'Tain't safe to carry clues in your overcoat pocket."

He darted up the steps, and then dodged back quickly.

Ted Tracy was standing on the landing and had made a lunge at him.

"I'll thump you for that!" shouted Bob, as he fairly sprang up the steps. Ted jumped back into the hallway to get a better position.

There was just a second of preparation, and then the two started in.

Bob delivered an uppercut and sent his opponent flying.

As the boy sprawled out on the floor he picked up his cap for him. Ted was too dazed to move for a second, and as Bob waited for him he spied a letter.

It had fallen from Ted's cap, and was addressed to Mr. Van Camp.

Bob picked it up and handed the boy his cap.

"I'll deliver this," he said, grinning. "You needn't come up. I'll chuck you down the elevator-shaft if I catch you in the office!"

The boy skulked out. His jaw was hurting him badly.

As Bob started up the stairs he looked sharply at the letter.

It was addressed in a lady's handwriting to "Artemas Van Camp, Esq.," and the printed card, "Lee & Phillips, Real Estate Brokers," was in the corner. Moreover, the envelope was marked "Personal," and underscored.

Bob stopped on the stairs and stared at it curiously.

The next minute he turned it over and looked at the back.



There was a queer mark along the entire flap of the envelope.

It looked as if some one's finger-nail had scratched it.

In less than a minute Bob had decided what to do.

The office door was unlocked. He went into the wash-room and started the hot water running.

Then holding the envelope carefully in the steam, he opened it with ease. At the very first words he saw that he was justified in the act.

Then he leaned against the wall and stared hard at the paper. He had discovered a connecting-link between the robbery and the murder.

#### CHAPTER IV.

##### ON THE TRAIL.

"The boy's news explains a great deal."

It was the chief who spoke.

He was seated in his private office talking to Decker.

"And mine explains nothing. The boy has outwitted me."

"On the contrary, he has had the good fortune to be at the proper place at the proper time. But, listen, and I will tell you what he has already accomplished."

"I am most anxious to know. I feel deeply interested in the clever fellow."

"Then listen."

The chief drew a letter from his pocket and balanced it between his fingers.

"I sent Bob to Van Camp. He employed him at once. He understood that I had sent him to spy on the employees of his office. At half-past five to-night, when all the clerks were gone, Mr. Van Camp himself received a visitor whom Bob declares is Alibi Job, Number 4092, Rogues' Gallery. The boy was clever enough to follow the fellow, and where do you think he located him? He is running as conductor between Chicago and 'Frisco, over the Santa Fé Railroad."

The old detective stared for a minute.

Bob's cleverness was winning his profound admiration.

"So Mr. Van Camp receives criminals at his office!"

"It seems so."

"That looks bad."

"It does; and yet it proves nothing. Criminals are fond of diamonds. But wait. I have something more to tell you."

"I am all attention."

"Bob overheard a few words of conversation between them. He is of the opinion that Job has furnished Van Camp with a pass or ticket, as he warned him jokingly that it was 'not transferable.'"

"Then Van Camp is guilty."

The detective spoke decidedly.

"I am not so sure, although appearances are against him. He may not even know the identity of his caller. Other people get passes, why not he?"

"True, but it looks bad. Especially at this time. If we only knew his motive for going."

"I think I have it!"

The chief spoke grimly.

"Bob intercepted this letter on its way to Van Camp. It is from a woman. You can read it, Decker."

He drew the letter from the envelope and passed it to the detective.

What Decker read was as follows:

"DEAREST: I hear that you are going, but beg you to wait. In twenty-four hours I can make all explanations."

There was no signature, not even an initial.

"A love-affair."

As the old detective spoke, he showed his teeth grimly.

"Worse! A conspiracy!"

The chief held out the envelope.

He pointed to the card in the corner.

The detective jumped to his feet with a whistle of surprise.

"Lee & Phillips, the brokers, by all the gods! That establishes a connection between the robbery and the murder!"

The chief put the letter back into the envelope, then held it to the light with the flap turned toward them.

"Here is another thing that Bob detected. Do you see that scratch on the flap of the envelope? The lady who sealed that is in need of a manicure. Her nails are so long that they leave their mark on everything."

"Then it is the bookkeeper, Miss Mason—I noticed her nails."

"Bob thinks so; still, we have no proof. However, you have your clue now, and a good one, too. You and Bob can finish up that case in a day or two, I fancy."

"I am glad to have such an able assistant. I was getting discouraged."

"That sounds strange from you, Decker."

The detective laughed.

"My motto is 'Never say die,' but this case is a puzzle from start to finish."

"It is clearer now, thanks to Bob. Miss Mason is sweet on Van Camp, without doubt. We must learn the extent of their acquaintance."

"That will take some time."

"Nevertheless, it must be accomplished. Remember, we have an ex-shoplifter to deal with."

"She could not have strangled that girl, chief."

"Why not?"

"First, because she has proven conclusively that she left the building at five o'clock. Second, because if she had choked the girl her nails would have scratched her. There was no mark on the neck, only a slight discoloration."

"Let me see that photograph again."

Decker pulled a picture from his pocket. It was a likeness of the dead girl which had been taken at the post-mortem.

The chief studied it carefully, then returned it to Decker.

"It is a pity so many hours passed before she was found. We can tell nothing by outward appearances, but we know she was suffocated."

"You have a theory as to how it was done, have you not, chief?"

"Yes; I think a rug was thrown over her head. There was a rug in the office."

"Her hair, face, and neck would have shown traces of dust in that case."

"Did they not?"

"No. Her face was like snow, it was so white, and her hair hung in a long, smooth braid. It was not even rumpled."

"Then I must be mistaken."

There was a moment of silence.

"If Van Camp stole money belonging as much to his partner as to himself, it is safe to say that he intends going out of business. He is probably about to shake the dust of Chicago from his feet. The mystery to me is why hasn't he done it before?"

"I think I can explain. He has not money enough."

"That is why I am suspicious of Miss Mason. She may have known his financial condition and decided to assist him."

"By robbing her own employer?"

"Exactly."

"The theory is plausible; still, she had left the building."

"And no one saw her return?"

"No, sir. The janitor swears positively that no one entered after five o'clock except the regular scrub-women."

"Have they been looked after?"

"All but one, Biddy Maloney. We cannot find her. This is explained, however, by her having told the janitor that she was about to leave the city."

"And the janitor is beyond suspicion?"

"Entirely. He has been there ten years. He is perfectly trustworthy."



"In spite of all this, I am still suspicious of Miss Mason." Decker thought deeply for a moment.

"Taking it for granted that she killed the girl, why did she not go ahead and rob the safe? I can see nothing in the world that would hinder her from doing so."

"She may have been scared off! Perhaps she heard a noise. You know most criminals scare easy."

"Yes, a guilty conscience frightens them sometimes. They drop their plunder at the sight of their own shadow. I call that a wonderful exhibition of mind over matter."

"It's a pity they don't work in the daytime, for then they would see their shadows oftener," laughed the chief. "Of course, they prefer darkness, so that their nerves will not be startled."

He was about to leave the office when some one came in. It was Bob, all out of breath from rapid running.

"I've got his schedule, chief! I know his run," were his first words. "He goes out on the nine-fifty, and Van Camp is going with him!"

The two detectives stared. This was quick work, indeed. The chief did not delay in putting some questions.

"How do you know?"

"I saw the ticket on his desk and turned it over. It is dated the ninth."

The chief glanced at his calendar.

It was the ninth of the month.

"And he was tearing up papers to beat the band."

This last argument seemed to be convincing.

Decker's brow grew dark.

The chief was plunged in thought.

They had hardly become suspicious when there was danger of losing their suspect.

But the chief was not a man to waste valuable time.

He decided that Van Camp's departure must be prevented, if possible, although there was not at present a particle of evidence upon which he could detain him.

He also decided to detain the woman. The question now was how to do it. At present Bob's word and that letter were the only connecting-links between the two crimes.

It would be like weaving a web from a single thread, but the chief was equal to it.

Bob listened in astonishment to the orders that followed.

He had no idea that the machinery of the law was so mighty or that human ingenuity could devise such cunning.

The chief had a certain end in view and he was determined to accomplish it.

For an hour the various detectives were coming and going, while the wires between a dozen points were kept fairly buzzing.

One of the callers at the office was Carlos Dudley.

The chief sent for him, and he came at once.

They were alone together for ten minutes, and then the gentleman went away, fairly ashen with excitement.

Bob gathered that he was indignant at the chief's suggestion. He was not inclined to believe his partner guilty.

When it came his turn to receive orders Bob's eyes nearly popped out of his head, for he was suddenly invested with a position of great dignity.

"You are a full-fledged detective now," said the chief, "and I expect you to give Mr. Decker able assistance. There are two disguises which you must carry with you some way, and here is some money for necessary expenses."

Bob took both the money and the bundle without a word, but his heart was beating like a trip-hammer.

It was a great disappointment when the chief left him without another word. Then Decker put his head in the doorway and beckoned to him. Five minutes later Bob had a valuable lesson.

Decker took him into a side room, where the curtains were drawn closely, and told him to disguise himself as quickly as possible. The detective, meanwhile, was doing the same.

In less than three minutes they were ready.

As a last detail the old detective handed Bob a revolver.

"Now we'll take a stroll past the building where Miss Evelyn Mason resides," said the detective calmly. As they started out they looked like a pair of Jew pedlers.

They were both clothed in odd garments and wore battered hats, and each carried a little tray bearing an assortment of cheap jewelry.

## CHAPTER V.

### A VISIT TO THE DRESSMAKER.

Decker led his companion rapidly across several brightly lighted streets, then into a quieter one, where there was a small family hotel on the corner. As he walked along he made Bob familiar with every detail of the murder as it was known to the police.

Evelyn Mason lived in the boarding-house which adjoined the hotel, and by standing near the entrance to the hotel they could cover the steps of the boarding-house with ease.

An electric light threw its rays in that direction, so that no one could enter or leave the house without being seen by the detectives.

They had hardly taken their positions at a little distance from each other when a cab rattled up and stopped at the curb.

A man sprang out.

In passing Bob he jostled him rudely.

"Get out of the way, you Jew hound!" he muttered savagely. "What do you mean by blocking up the sidewalk!"

Bob's first thought was to give him back as good as he sent, but a second glance showed him that such a course would be folly.

At the same time he heard a warning whistle from Decker, and the next minute his companion walked slowly past him.

"That was Van Camp?"

Decker spoke in a low tone.

Bob nodded his head.

He had recognized the importer the moment he stepped into the light, and his sharp glance followed him.

The man ran rapidly up the steps of the boarding-house and in a moment the door closed behind him.

"This looks like business."

The detective still spoke cautiously.

There were people coming and going, and two cabs with their drivers were only ten feet distant.

"How late can we keep this thing up?" asked Bob, pointing to his wares. "Ain't it a little uncommon to be peddling at this hour in this neighborhood? It's all right in some parts of the city, of course, but some one may think we're working overtime. Suppose some other detective should see us."

"They wouldn't know us from two hitching-posts, and, besides, the reputation of our race will save us. Who is to say at what hour a Jew shall refrain from making a penny?"

Bob chuckled to himself.

A moment later Van Camp came out. He went straight to one of the cabs and began negotiations with the driver.

Bob moved a little closer, at the risk of another shove, and heard every word of the brief conversation distinctly.

"Drive me to the Dearborn Street Depot. You have just ten minutes. I want to catch the nine-fifty."

"Can't do it in that time, boss. My hind wheel is loose. I've just sent word to the stable. Jack, here, will take you."

A curse fell from the man's lips. He seemed greatly excited. In a second he was calling to the other cabby.

Bob slung his tray over his shoulder and walked past the two. He was in time to hear the request repeated. The cabman threw open the door of his vehicle and Van Camp sprang in.

As the horses started Bob whispered to Decker.

"He's off for the depot! Now, where the deuce is she?"



"Wait here and see if she comes out. I'll be back in a minute," was Decker's reply. "It looks as though the rascal was going without her."

He handed his tray to Bob and then glanced around.

A District Messenger boy had just left his bicycle standing at the curb.

It was in the shadow of the building, and without a second's hesitation the detective sprang onto it.

As he glided noiselessly after the cab, Bob found another position where he was more secluded, but yet able to watch the steps of the boarding-house.

He emptied the contents of Decker's tray into his own, and threw the extra tray into the street.

When he looked back toward the door he saw a lady just leaving it.

A sharp glance showed him that it was Evelyn Mason.

She walked rapidly down the street with a firm, graceful carriage.

He followed her many blocks and finally saw her enter a building.

By the light of his match he had caught a glimpse of a very fresh-looking sign upon the clumsy door. It bore the words:

"MRS. LEVY,  
Fashionable Dressmaker."

Bob thought for a minute after his match went out. He was not at all pleased to have lost his quarry.

"A fine time of night to be visiting a dressmaker," he muttered in disgust.

He lit another match and examined the sign more carefully.

"Looks like a brand-new one." Bob had noticed the fresh paint. "I'll take a look at some of these other places. I want to see if there are any more signs of enterprise in the neighborhood. What the deuce do they want of a dressmaker in these diggings! I should think a branch office of the board of health and street-cleaning department would be more suitable."

He moved on cautiously.

The house with the dressmaker's sign over the door had a vacant lot on one side of it.

The building next door was empty.

The windows were smashed out and it had a desolate air.

Then came two or three low buildings, in which lived cobblers and small tradesmen. The block ended with the usual saloon on the corner.

Bob crossed the street and walked back on the other side.

He had not seen a creature of any description.

Almost opposite the dressmaker's he suddenly stumbled over something.

It felt like a bundle of rags, but as he kicked it again to make sure the bundle emitted a howl of anguish.

"Gee whiz! It's a kid, as true as I live!" he said sharply, then bent down over the prostrate figure.

"Help me up, boss! I'm a cripple!" said a squeaky voice. "Some one knocked me down and I can't get up. It's lucky there ain't no more passin' than there is. I'd have been black and blue with all the kickin'!"

"I'm sorry I stepped on you! Why didn't you holler before you were hurt, then I wouldn't have kicked you?"

Bob took hold of the fellow's arm. He raised him easily, for he only weighed about a hundred pounds, and as Bob stood him up he saw that one of the boy's feet was missing.

"There's a crutch somewheres! They kicked it out from under me!" he said, in a whining voice, as he leaned heavily on Bob.

Bob felt around carefully with his foot until he found it. Then he picked up the crutch and put it under the boy's arm.

"Now, are you all right?"

"I'm as right as I ever am. Everybody kicks me. That's what I'm for. They say kicks and cuffs were made for a cripple."

"I'd like to meet the man who says it. I'd punch the face off of him in about a jiffy!"

"They say it in there!" said the boy, nodding his head toward the building that Miss Mason had just entered. "But, then, they're a hard lot. They're nothing but cut-throats, I reckon!"

Bob caught his breath with a little gasp.

He had actually stumbled upon some valuable information.

"Tell me what you know of them."

He slipped a quarter into the thin hand of the cripple.

In a second the lame boy peered at him sharply. They were so near together that they could see each other's features.

"What do you want to know for?"

Bob's answer came quickly.

"I used to know a Mrs. Levy. She was a dressmaker. I'm anxious to know if this is my old friend. I might want to go in and renew my acquaintance."

A shrill peal of laughter broke from the cripple's lips.

"Better keep out of there, kid! Particularly at night! 'Tain't likely it's the Mrs. Levy you know, anyway. To tell you the truth, I ain't never seen her."

"Do you live in this block?"

"Naw! I don't live anywheres. I'm a walking-delegate from the Union of Outcasts. I reside in doorways and dine off'n garbage-cans, but I'm as often in this street as any other."

"And you don't know Mrs. Levy, the fashionable dressmaker?"

"No, I don't know her, and, what's more, there don't no one else. If you don't believe it, come around in the daytime."

Bob slipped another quarter into the puny hand.

"Tell me what is going on in there now," he said. "Is it a confidence game, a poker club, or what? A friend of mine just went in there, and I'm dying of curiosity."

As he said the last words the cripple uttered a cry.

"Who the deuce be you, anyway?" he asked, in a scared whisper. "There ain't no one can get in that house without knowin' the signal. I knows it, of course, because I works for them sometimes, and I gets my pay in kicks and curses!"

He muttered the last words in an ugly voice. Bob was not slow in reading the poor boy's feelings.

"You don't love them, I fancy? Then why not square your account? Tell me exactly who they are and what is going on in there. Don't be afraid to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. I'll pay you in something besides kicks and curses."

"Who the devil be you?"

The boy was even more eager than before. He bent over once more and peered at Bob carefully.

"I'm Bob Lightfoot, my friend. I'm only a boy like yourself, only I have the good luck to have both feet," was the quick answer. "I told you the truth when I said some one just went into that house. It was a very pretty young lady by the name of Miss Mason. Now, what I want to know is, what is going on in that building?"

The cripple's face grew whiter as Bob spoke. His eyes were bulging. In a second he put his lips close to Bob's ear and spoke in a thrilling whisper:

"You needn't never expect to see her again. That's the headquarters of the 'Ten Threes.' There don't no one come out of there when they've once gone in. At least, if they do, there don't nobody see 'em."

Bob gave a whistle of surprise.

Here was news indeed.

The question now was to be sure the cripple was not lying.

Even the chief of police did not know of this place. It would be a feather in his cap if he succeeded in proving it.

There was the sound of rapid feet coming down the



street. Suddenly Bob was delighted to hear Decker's whistle. The sound alarmed the cripple and he started to run.

As Bob promptly returned the whistle, he fairly bounded along the sidewalk.

Bob set his tray down on the curb and darted after him, with a warning cry to Decker.

The next second there was an extraordinary race in progress.

Two able-bodied young men were chasing one cripple.

## CHAPTER VI.

### A NOVEL RUSE.

"Which way did he go?"

"The devil knows, I don't! He must have slunk into some hole or other."

Decker and "the Shadow" were staring at each other. They were nearly two blocks from the place where the race started.

"What was it, anyway—man, bird, or beast? I caught a glimpse of something just as you hollered. Of course, I put after it as hard as I could go. You can search me, though! I don't know what I was chasing!"

Bob laughed disgustedly. He was sorely disappointed.

"It was a cripple. I found him in the street. Some one had knocked him down."

"Why did you chase him?"

"He gave me some news that will astonish you."

"What is it?"

Bob related his news as rapidly as he could. He talked very softly, so that if any one was lurking near they could not hear him. Decker gave a low whistle when the story ended.

It was news indeed. For a minute he was puzzled.

"I'd like to get in there," he said.

"And never come out?"

"Pshaw! I'd risk that part of it! I've been in places before that were not supposed to have exits."

"I am ready to go with you. And I know the signal."

The old detective looked at Bob and smiled approvingly.

"You are made of the right stuff, Bob! You've got pluck to burn! I wish we could think of some way of trapping that gang by ourselves. Just think of the glory the thing would give us!"

Bob's eyes snapped brightly. He had thought of that. It was a way of proving his cleverness at the start. If he could capture these rascals his reputation would be established.

Decker was making some changes in his costume.

He removed his false beard and turned his coat wrong side out.

A soft hat slouched down over one eye completed the disguise.

He now resembled an ordinary street loafer. Bob was still in the garb of a pedler.

Decker looked at him critically, then made a suggestion.

In a second Bob darted into one of the darkest doorways.

When he emerged he looked like the newsboys and boot-blacks of the city.

He was ragged from head to foot, and his face was dirty.

"Now I guess we're all right," chuckled Decker. "We now look like the other residents of this neighborhood."

"How many do you suppose are in there?"

Bob asked the question as they walked back to the house. The detective replied without a minute's hesitation.

"Three."

"How do you know?"

"That's the way they travel. In threes. There are thirty of them in all, and they never vary their number. They work in ten sets, three in each set. When one of them gets killed, as one occasionally does, they fill his place with the choicest criminal in the collection."

"They must be a hot crowd!"

"You bet they are! I'd rather go into a den of bears. In this case, it seems that one of their number is a woman."

Bob stopped on the sidewalk and stared at his friend.

"You mean Miss Mason! Gee whiz! Then she's safe! I was worrying about her. I thought she would be murdered."

The detective laughed.

"You must be stuck on her shape, Bob. She's a pretty girl, all right. Whew! She must be a corker!"

"I should say so, if she belongs to that gang."

Both the detectives halted. They had come as near to the place as they dared.

Decker lighted a match under his coat and glanced at his watch.

"Almost eleven. Whatever we do must be done at once. Still, it isn't likely that things will warm up inside there much before midnight. They are probably getting their plans in shape for some robbery before morning. We will prevent that. The way to do it is to investigate the building. There must be another door, if they don't come out this way."

"Of course, and one of us can stand at each."

Bob was feeling for the pistol that Decker had given him.

"We can hold them up and march them to the station-house. What will we do to the woman?"

"Treat her exactly as we do the others. But your plan isn't feasible, Bob. We would not have a ghost of a show."

"Why not?"

"Those fellows know this district as well as the rats do. We would probably break our necks if we attempted to follow them. Then they are wonderfully quick on the trigger, while I fancy that big 'pop' will bother you a little. No, I'm afraid we'll have to ask the chief for help. Now, where the deuce is the nearest telephone?"

He glanced up the street, while Bob looked in the other direction.

As they gazed, a shaft of light suddenly shot out from the gloomy building.

"Another arrival!"

Bob darted back into the shadow.

Decker followed him swiftly.

Both strained their eyes to watch what happened.

A second later a crooked creature hobbled into the light. In an instant the door closed. Bob had the cripple in his arms.

The lame boy was spitting and scratching like a wildcat.

"Quick! Take him somewhere and lock him up. He was going to betray us," Bob cried.

"I knew he'd be in there like a flash if I didn't jump. I didn't mean that he should escape us this time!"

Bob gripped the cripple's arms and Decker took the fellow's legs.

Together they carried him into a deserted hallway.

The fellow was still spitting and snarling, but he did not speak. As Decker lit a match and looked at him, they could both see that he was in a fit of some kind.

"Poor devil! He isn't to blame! He is mad!"

"It's a wonder they let him in there at all. Still, perhaps that is the very reason they trust him. They think because he is a loon that no one will believe him."

"I'm sorry for him, but I don't like his treachery a little bit! There isn't a doubt in my mind but what he was going to warn them. Even as it is, he has probably given an alarm. Now what the mischief will we do next, Mr. Decker?"

The detective was doing some hard thinking. The cripple had stopped struggling, and he was able to let go of him.

"I'll get help somewhere and take this poor boy to the station-house."

He glanced out of the doorway.

There was no one in sight for the space of a second. Then a policeman's unsteady tramp could be heard at the corner of the block.



Decker put his fingers to his lips and gave a shrill whistle.

As the officer turned he hurried to meet him.

Five minutes later the cripple was on his way to the station-house.

McNulty, as drunk as he was, had recognized the detective's badge, and knew that he must obey orders or lose his position.

Decker scribbled a note to the sergeant and sent it along with him. There was no mention in the note of the detective's errand in that locality, only a request that he guard the cripple and give him all the care needed.

McNulty sobered up quickly when he saw who he was talking to. As he hurried away with the lame boy in his arms, both Decker and Bob felt that they had accomplished something.

"Now if we could only get into that house."

## CHAPTER VII.

### IN THE LAIR OF THE LAWLESS.

The detective crept close to the door as he spoke, and put his ear to the panel.

There was not a sound to be heard in the building.

He turned to get a better position. In doing so he touched the door lightly.

Instantly the door swung open.

Not a ray of light emerged. The hallway in front of them was in darkness.

"They forgot to lock it," muttered Decker. "You must have rattled them, Bob!"

He stepped into the hallway, and "the Shadow" promptly followed him. They were, at last, in the strange house.

It was as dark as midnight. They could not see a foot ahead of them.

Decker groped around.

It was a narrow hallway, about six feet long.

At one end was another heavy door.

He pushed it open.

As he did so, a soft glare of light struck him for a minute. "Well, of all things!"

Bob made the exclamation when they were fairly inside, with both of the heavy doors closed behind them.

They were in a room of ordinary dimensions, which was fitted up like a dressmaker's show-room. The room faced the street, and had two windows.

These were covered with wooden shutters of unusual thickness.

It would have required the strength of a giant to move them.

Two or three "forms" were standing about, and bits of cheap muslin and cloth were scattered here and there.

A full-sized "dummy," clumsily draped, stood upon a pedestal in one corner.

The old detective stared in wonder. He had not dreamed of finding a workroom in the house.

It only showed how particular the "Ten Threes" were in every detail of their business.

They were suddenly set upon by a giant, backed up by several others, and, being taken by surprise, found themselves prisoners in some sort of a cell.

Their hands were tied, but Bob managed to free himself and then in turn released his companion.

It was now that they heard voices near-by, and, straining their ears, caught scraps of conversation.

"Where are they now, Mrs. Maloney?"

It was Evelyn Mason's voice.

The two detectives held their breath to catch the answer.

"Faith, they're both in the cage, bad luck to thim, miss! and wid their hands tied so nately, too."

"Then they are together, but safe."

Evelyn Mason said the words distinctly, and the detectives could hear the sigh of relief that escaped her.

"They do be as safe as two bugs in a jug, niver fear," said the other voice again. "Shure the light do be set and I am sthandin' guard! Bad luck to thim if they have the ordassity to discover me panel!"

"Then I'll go, I guess," said Miss Mason quickly.

"And ye'll take another look at thim figures, won't ye, honey! B' the howly St. Pathrick! It's too bad yez failed! Shure, yez ain't got much nerve for an onprincipled huzzy!"

"How dare you! You miserable creature!" cried Miss Mason shrilly. "How dare you use such language to me! Why, I could hang you with a word, and you know it, Maloney!"

A coarse laugh from her companion followed.

"We'll hang together, faith, whin we hang!" was the answer.

"I'll have the captain punish you if you talk too much!" went on Miss Mason furiously. "Your duty is to watch and not to talk! Keep your tongue between your teeth and watch, you hear me!"

Her companion, whoever it was, did not reply.

It was probable that she had some reason for restraining her speech a little.

"You are sure they are safe," said Miss Mason again. "You are sure they haven't discovered the panel?"

"Faith, if they touch the loikes av that I can pick them off aisy," growled the other voice. "And don't be mindin' the words av an old woman, honey! Faith, it's a drap too much I am after havin'!"

"Do your duty and I'll say nothing," answered Miss Mason more softly. "Shoot them if you have to; nobody will hear. There is plenty of room in the cellar!"

The detectives looked at each other.

Here was a pleasant prospect.

They could hear Miss Mason walking away after giving her order.

Then the key grated in the lock and the door swung open.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### STRANGE HAPPENINGS.

A coarse, uncouth-looking creature stood upon the threshold. There was a light in the hall, so the detectives could see her distinctly.

She was short in stature and very fat. As she made her way into the room she seemed to waddle.

Coming in from the light, she was obliged to move slowly, but, after a quick glance toward the glass panel, she closed the door behind her.

So far as she could see, everything was exactly as she had left it. She was not prepared for what was to follow.

In a second Decker's hand was over her mouth.

The other hand found its way to her back hair in a jiffy.

The detective dragged her across the room, while Bob ran and turned the reflector.

Two minutes later she was bound hand and foot and there was a gag in her mouth.

Decker had made one deftly by tearing a strip from a blanket.

"So far, so good," he muttered, as he viewed his work.

The old hag glared at him.

She could not move a muscle.

There was no doubt in the detective's mind as to what she was thinking.

She would have flown at him tooth and nail if she could possibly have done so.

Bob was watching the door as well as the panel.

If any one opened either he would know it in an instant.

"Now the thing to do is to make our escape," said Decker softly.

"You and I are not enough to tackle this game! We must get out of this place and ask help of the office."



"We can easily get out now," said Bob, as he jingled the bunch of keys.

"That is, unless there are more of them here than we have run up against so far!"

"I think this is the limit," was the detective's answer.

There was something lying on the floor at his feet.

He bent and picked it up.

It was a woman's "chignon."

Bob gave a whistle as he saw the wig.

Decker was already examining his prisoner's cranium.

"Exactly what I thought! The old dame is padded!" he cried. "Look, Bob, she is stuffed like a Thanksgiving turkey!"

He gave a jerk at the woman's outer garment as he spoke.

The sound of ripping followed, and then several buttons parted.

The detective pulled off a skirt that was thick with cotton-batting. Underneath was another skirt, which also looked suspicious.

"Gee! I thought she looked awful fat, but what's your game, Mr. Decker?" asked Bob, growing excited.

"I'm looking for some one!" chuckled the detective.

A flash from his prisoner's eyes almost lit the apartment.

They seemed to emit sparks like a wildcat's or panther's.

"She wouldn't do a thing to you if she had her hands, would she?" grinned Bob.

Decker did not answer. He was tugging at another garment. A moment later the last button gave way.

This time the loss of a skirt disclosed a pair of heavy trousers, a vest, and a sack coat of threadbare alpaca.

Bob gave a whistle of surprise, but the detective still chuckled.

"I thought she was a man," he muttered, under his breath. "I knew the minute I looked at her that her shape was artificial."

Once more Bob was lost in admiration of detectives in general and Decker in particular.

He was not allowed to indulge his reflections.

"Here, help me tie him to the bed!" ordered the detective quickly. "He'll be very comfortable for half an hour if I ease up that gag a little. In that time I'll have some one here to take him to safer quarters."

"Mr. Decker!"

Bob spoke so sharply that the old detective jumped.

"Gee! But we are stupid! Why, we've caught a suspect! Didn't you hear Miss Mason call him 'Mrs. Maloney'?"

"The scrubwoman! By Jove! I never thought of that!"

"Neither did I for a minute, but, of course, that's who it is! He's the woman that cleaned the offices the day of the murder!"

Bob was so excited that he got badly mixed on his gender.

Decker was dazed for a minute.

"It's a queer mix-up, Bob," he said finally. "Now, why should this scamp talk Irish to Miss Mason? It looks as if they were not very well acquainted."

"It does seem funny!"

"Well, there's one thing certain, Bob. We haven't got to go any further to find our murderer."

"My opinion exactly. Now, what is to be done, Mr. Decker?"

The detective tossed the feminine apparel into one corner of the room.

After that he proceeded to examine his prisoner's pockets. Bob looked on eagerly.

Two or three skeleton keys were in every pocket.

There was also a paper bearing the plans of office buildings.

They had caught a rare bird.

Decker could not help feeling jubilant, in spite of the fact that they were still in dangerous quarters.

"Now, where is the gun?"

He asked the question anxiously.

He had found everything else, but there was no sign of a weapon.

Bob went over the pile of clothing.

It was all in vain.

If the fellow had possessed a revolver they could not find it.

Decker unlocked the door when it was seen that the search was useless.

As they stepped out into the dimly lighted hall it closed and locked after them.

They made their way swiftly to the front of the building.

Each door was unlocked, and each closed with a spring lock as soon as they had passed through it.

When they reached the front door Decker tried every key on the bunch. Not one of them fitted the peculiar-shaped keyhole.

An expression of disgust rose to his lips at his failure.

"The very one we need most," he began furiously.

Then in an instant he thought it out.

"By Jove, Bob! I believe I have the secret of this thing! That fellow we just left in that room is a prisoner here. If he wasn't, why wouldn't he have a key to the outside door?"

"That's so! Why wouldn't he? Let's go back?" said Bob quickly. "Perhaps, if we put the screws on, we may make him tell something."

"A good idea, especially as we can't get any farther," was the answer.

Bob had been holding open the inner door so that the light from the showroom would illuminate the entry.

As he spoke they both went back into the larger room.

Decker began selecting his keys to make the backward journey.

He had discovered that each key and each door was numbered.

But his efforts were useless.

Not a key would fit.

They were made to open the doors from one side only.

"Well, if that don't beat anything I ever saw!" he said disgustedly.

"It begins to look as if we would never get out of this old rookery."

Bob was deep in thought.

Suddenly he bent forward to examine the wall, and cried out: "I've found an electric wire that is genuinely alive, I can tell you! Hold on a minute till I find where it goes to!"

Sure enough, there were some wires running straight up the partition.

He could trace them at intervals where the plaster had crumbled.

"Now, where the deuce do you suppose they lead to?" he asked.

Bob gave a whistle.

He had thought of something.

"That is how they got in without the signal, I'll bet!" he said quickly. "They punched the button at the other end, and whoever was on guard stood ready at the portals."

"They must run on schedule!" muttered Decker; "but, see here, Bob! Suppose those wires connect with some other den! We may call a dozen cutthroats if we punch the button!"

"Let them come!" gasped Bob, who was standing on tip-toe. "The more the merrier! Anything is better than this! Now, why didn't they set that button on the roof, I wonder!"

He was jabbing a small button vigorously as he spoke.

Then they both pricked up their ears, for something extraordinary was happening.

Somewhere in the room a telegraph-instrument began ticking.



## CHAPTER IX.

## LIBERTY.

"Well, I'll be darned!" began Decker.

Bob stopped him with a gesture.

His head was bent and he was listening intently.

Telegraphy had not been included in the old detective's education, but he saw at a glance that "the Shadow" was familiar with it.

The moment the instrument ceased, Bob exploded with laughter.

"If that ain't a lark, Decker! The wires are crossed! I turned in an alarm on that electric button, and now somebody wants to know on the machine what the dickens is the matter!"

Decker's eyes stuck out.

He put his thinking-cap on at once, in order to take advantage of it.

"We must answer that, Bob! Can you do it?" he asked, after a minute.

"You bet! I can send like a streak of lightning."

Bob got his chair and mounted upon it.

In a second he was punching the button.

This time there was no jabbing or disconnected punching, for he was doing his best to talk the language of dots and dashes through the medium of a gong and an ordinary button.

That he succeeded in some measure was proven in a minute.

There was another click of the hidden instrument.

"What did you say to them?" asked Decker eagerly.

Bob listened until the clicking stopped before he answered.

"I tried to say that there was something wrong, and some one had better come, but I reckon I must have made a mess of it."

"Why?"

Bob grinned as he answered.

"Because they are calling me everything from a horse-thief to a liar!"

"Is that all?"

"No; the sender says to hide the plunder."

"How?"

The machine began again as he asked the question.

It stopped after clicking off quite a long sentence.

"By dragging it out into the other cellar; but we must be very careful, as the casket is rotten."

As Bob explained the message his eyes popped open wider.

"So we hit it right! There is plunder!" began Decker.

"Now, what in thunder do they mean by the casket?"

"Maybe it's the coffin!" suggested Bob. "That would be a dandy place to hide things, wouldn't it?"

Decker had been eying the wall as he spoke, and now shook his head disgustedly.

"That machine isn't there! I'll swear it isn't! Quick! Punch the button again, Bob, and tell them to send help immediately!"

Bob was up on the chair again, with his finger on the button. This time he must have bungled it terribly.

A perfect volley of curses from the machine replied promptly to his efforts.

"They are mad as hornets!" he explained to Decker.

Then once more he put his finger on the button.

This time only one word was spelled out by the mystic symbols.

"That word was 'Help!'"

Five minutes passed, and there was not a word from the instrument. Bob and the detective looked at each other disgustedly.

"I guess they intend to let Mrs. Maloney protect herself the best way she can," muttered Decker. "There isn't a sign of any one coming."

They waited another five minutes, and then the instrument clicked again.

This time it spelled a word slowly. The word was "Coming."

Decker's brow cleared instantly. He set to work at once to bring back the stuff from the entry. Bob kept the treacherous door open by setting a chair against it.

"It's dollars to doughnuts they come in the back way," he said, as he helped Decker with the work.

"As we can't get to the rear, we'll stay in front; eh, Bob?" was Decker's answer.

"And we'll put up a good fight, you bet! Even if we are cornered!"

"You bet!"

Bob kicked the dummy into place, then the two took up their positions in the little entry.

"Who the mischief is to open the door when they give the signal? Our keys don't fit!" whispered Bob, after a minute.

The click of a key on the outside seemed to answer the question. As the door slowly opened Decker made a dash for liberty.

Bob followed instantly, and nearly fell over Decker.

The detective had a man by the collar, and was shaking him like a terrier.

Bob watched his chance and got in a blow under the fellow's ear. When he went down Decker was on top.

As they fell the detective managed to jerk a pistol out of the fellow's hip pocket.

Bob was peering up and down the block, to see if any one was coming.

A fine rain had set in, and the street was darker than ever.

"Now, then, Bob, find a telephone and send for help at once! Tell them not to lose a minute!" said Decker, who was nearly winded.

Bob fairly flew down the street. He felt as light as a feather. He had never before appreciated his liberty.

The saloon on the corner was open all night. As he dashed into the place the bartender looked at him stupidly.

"Faith, will yez loan me the use of yer tilphone, boss?" he asked politely. "Me mother's down wid de gripes, an' me fayther's groanin' wid the mollygrubbs, an' it's the dochter they do be afther wantin'!"

The bartender nodded toward the telephone-closet, and went on with his work washing dirty glasses.

Bob called up headquarters as softly as possible.

When he darted out of the saloon he tossed a quarter to the bartender. Then he flew down the street to enlighten Decker.

As he neared the house he strained his eyes. Then he stopped on the muddy crossing and peered up over the door.

The dressmaker's sign was still there, but there was not a trace of Decker or his victim.

Bob whistled with surprise. He could not understand it. He was sure the man was thoroughly whipped before he left them.

While he was searching the various hallways in the block the patrol-wagon rattled up.

A posse of bluecoats sprang to the sidewalk.

As rapidly as he could Bob told them what had happened.

It was an extraordinary story, and the men stared at each other.

One of the men had some lanterns, and they were all armed with clubs. As they reached the first door Bob handed them the keys. He was curious to see what luck they would have with them.

## CHAPTER X.

## THE MAN-TRAP.

"I guess the kid was right, after all! It is a man-trap!"

The officer admitted this after trying every key in the bunch on the very first door.

Then he ordered his men to break in the panels.



Smash! crash! went the clubs, and the wood was splintered.

Acting on Bob's suggestions, the officer in charge put his arm through the hole and inserted the key on the other side.

The door opened easily.

This process was repeated at every door.

They found Maloney exactly where Decker left him.

Bob talked rapidly.

The bluecoats respected his information now.

They were satisfied that he knew what he was talking about.

They removed the gag from the fellow's mouth.

He was so thoroughly scared that he could not speak for a minute.

"Make him talk!" cried Bob, coming close to the bed. "Give him the 'third degree' and make him squeal on the others!"

They unbound the fellow and set him up on the edge of the bed.

His face was like chalk and his teeth were chattering.

"So you are Mrs. Maloney?" began the officer.

Then he "put on the screws."

He depicted the horrors of dungeon cells and painted the electric chair in glowing colors.

He even reminded him of what awaited him in the hereafter.

Long after he was through Maloney was whimpering like a baby.

Bob pressed eagerly forward.

"You cleaned the offices for Lee & Phillips, and you murdered that poor girl! Oh, what a neck you will have after it is stretched."

The fellow was almost frothing at the mouth.

"It's a lie! I didn't!" he chattered shrilly.

"Then who did?" asked the officer, giving him a shake.

The fellow's teeth chattered again, and his eyeballs rolled frantically. He was half-scared out of his wits, and it was some time before he answered.

"She did it! Miss Mason, the bookkeeper! Don't bother with me, officer; I am a poor, innocent victim!"

"You look it!" laughed the officer, giving him a shake.

Then he turned to his men and gave an order.

"Two of you take him to the station-house. Take his make-up with him. There's his clothes in the corner. We'll dress him up and have some one identify him to-morrow."

"Don't forget the topknot!" said Bob, as he picked up the wig. "Decker yanked that off the minute he touched him."

"Snatched him bald-headed, hey!" said one of the men, laughing.

As soon as the fellow was led away the search was renewed. Bob pointed out the glass panel and the trap-door to the cellar. A man was sent to follow the electric wire.

Five minutes later the telegraph-instrument was discovered.

The "plaster" in front of it was only dirty white paper.

The officers finally investigated the cellar.

There was an underground tunnel running under the wall of the house.

It extended across the vacant lot and opened into a neighboring alley.

Another mode of exit was through a hole in the cellar wall to the cellar of the vacant house next door. But there was nothing to be seen of any graveyard.

Miss Mason's words must have been a mere joke.

When they found the "coffin" Bob's eyes flew open.

There was a small fortune in diamonds and other gems, done up in old newspapers.

"The Shadow" was the last person to leave the house.

He had been there all night, and was tired and hungry. But not for a minute did he dream of shirking his duty. He knew that he must report to the chief for further orders. He dropped in at the police-station on the way.

The cripple was safe, and so was "Mrs. Maloney."

They had done a good night's work, after all, in spite of their failures.

This brought him back to think of Decker.

He stopped in a cheap restaurant and ate a bite of breakfast, then went into the wash-room and tidied himself up a little.

When he came out he was Bob Lightfoot once more, even to the blue cap with the gold buttons.

The chief looked radiant when he entered the office.

He had been apprised of the whole affair.

He greeted Bob as if he were a hero.

As quickly as he could, Bob asked for Decker.

"He is safe, my boy! He's on another trail," was the answer. "The man he captured was one of the gang. He has promised to divulge the whole secret of the 'Ten Threes,' provided he be allowed to escape and leave the country."

"They made the quickest disappearance on record," said Bob delightedly; "but I'm glad Decker is safe. I thought he was a goner!"

The chief smiled.

He knew the detective better than Bob did, but there was no time now to sing his praises.

The chief had orders for him, which he proceeded at once to give.

"That woman, Miss Mason, has escaped! You must find her, Bob!"

"The Shadow" pricked up his ears.

Here was a big undertaking, for, of course, she would not return to her boarding-house. It would be like looking for a needle in a haystack.

Some one entered the office.

It was Greenleaf.

He glanced at Bob, and then imparted his information.

"Van Camp swears that he knows nothing of the 'Ten Threes' gang, but admits that he knows of a person by the name of Mason. He says she is a woman who has annoyed him with her attentions."

"And what is your opinion of his story?" asked the chief.

"I believe him."

"Where is he now?"

"At his hotel—the Palmer House."

"He is going on like a maniac, and says we are treating him infamously. And all because we have questioned him about his relations with that woman. There has not been a hint that we are suspicious of him. He thinks our questions are all directed toward the murder."

"Let him continue to think so. It will prevent him hurrying from the city. In twenty-four hours we may be able to arrest him."

"What more is needed before that can be accomplished?"

"We must catch Miss Mason, and hear what she has to say; then we must wring a full confession from that fellow Maloney. He's a wonderfully clever crook, but we scared the life nearly out of him."

Another man entered.

It was Decker.

In a second the old detective and Bob were shaking hands with each other.

"A hard night's work for the first one, my boy," laughed Decker. "I hope this isn't the gait you will always have to follow."

"If it is, I hope you'll be with me," was Bob's answer. "I'll never flinch from the fight when you are behind me, Mr. Decker."

"Then you are ready for a fresh deal of danger, eh?"

"You bet!"

Decker turned to the chief, who was looking on smilingly.

"I've got enough clues to hang every crook in Chicago," he said grimly. "All I've got to do now, chief, is to hustle and catch 'em."



## CHAPTER XI.

## THE PIT.

"Wait!"

The chief spoke quickly.

A clerk was entering, holding a message.

The great sleuth opened it.

He read it aloud:

"Conductor of train number six, nine-fifty, from Chicago, received wire from V. C. Contents unknown. Watch for answer, which has not yet been sent."

Greenleaf sprang to his feet.

"That means that I had better get up to the Palmer House lively and intercept that message."

The chief nodded his head.

In an instant the detective had left the office.

"There is certainly a strange intimacy between Van Camp and 'Alibi Job,'" mused the chief. "I would give a great deal to be able to read that message."

"Yet I cannot connect 'Alibi Job' or Van Camp with the 'Ten Threes' gang in any way," was the answer.

"Except that Miss Mason was sweet on Van Camp, which is a very uncertain connection," laughed the chief.

"It will be a big batch of rascals if they are all caught; but now I'll tell the rest of my story."

Bob moved a little nearer, so that he could hear every word.

As the detective talked he did not take his eyes off of him.

"That fellow that responded to Bob's call for help when we were locked up in that house was Bill Hyson, 'the Prairie-Dog.' He is a member of the 'Ten Threes,' and that wire connected with his office."

"What kind of an office?" the chief broke in excitedly.

Decker smiled.

"He's been here three weeks, and has established an agency for sewing-machines, I believe. He rigged up as a lineman, and strung the wires himself. The telegraph people have not got on to it."

"Has he done any business?"

"Nothing except crooked business. He admits cracking that safe in the Bellows Building."

"And the murder?"

"He says Mason and Maloney are responsible for that."

"And the robbery at Van Camp's?"

"He knows nothing about it. He didn't even know that there had been such a robbery."

"Who was the big fellow?"

"The captain of the gang. He doesn't count in 'The Threes.' He is at liberty to go anywhere. Makes it a point to drop in at any old time to see what his men are doing."

"Then Mason, Maloney, and Hyson make up the gang?"

"No, Mason is not in it. She is only the sweetheart of the captain. She's a crook, of course, so they let her in on some deals. It's against the rules of the organization to have a female member."

"Well, she deserves to hold a high position. She is probably an accomplice, if not the murderer."

"How did you get all this information out of Hyson?"

The detective laughed.

"At the point of his own revolver, in a dark alley. I took the weapon from his pocket when Bob knocked him down. He was able to walk, so I shoved him into the alley."

"Hyson is the meanest crook I ever saw! He'd squeal on his best friend to save his own hide. He talked like a race-horse, in order to tell all he knew, so that we would feel obliged to reward him with his liberty."

"Where is he now?" asked the chief, with a smile.

"In the Bottomless Pit," was Decker's extraordinary answer.

Bob jumped to his feet, and both men laughed.

"The 'Bottomless Pit' is a little den we fellows have to hide

our 'squealers' in," Decker explained good-naturedly. "It's where we give them the 'third degree.' It's a room in the cellar of one of our station-houses; and, by the way, chief, those window-guards need attention. I looked at them today. The wall around them is crumbling."

"I suppose it's caused by the dampness. They must be mended," was the answer. "As soon as you bring him upstairs I will have them looked after."

"I should like to see that place," said Bob, who was still staring.

"You will have that pleasure," was the chief's answer. "But the 'Bottomless Pit' is only our pet name for the place. In reality, it should be called the 'Detectives' House of Detention.'"

"I see! The detectives have a little house of detention of their own!" laughed Bob. "Well, I suppose they can handle the rascals better there than they can in the big one."

The two detectives looked at each other and smiled.

"The Shadow" was not slow in catching onto their ways and methods.

Bob was eager to see the place, but there was work to do first. The chief had turned to his desk, and was scribbling a message.

"Before you visit the 'pit,' here is an errand for you to do, Bob," he said, when it was finished.

He handed "the Shadow" a sealed note as he spoke.

"Take that to Officer Fitzgerald. You'll find him near the corner of Pearl and Blue Island Avenue."

Decker pricked up his ears.

"There are a lot of old railroad shanties on his beat," went on the chief, "and I want him to look them over now and then. They would afford excellent hiding-places for our batch of criminals."

"That is so," admitted Decker.

The chief consulted his watch.

"Give him that note and bring me a reply. I will expect you back in an hour and a quarter."

Bob glanced at the clock and darted from the office.

In half an hour he was on the corner, looking for the officer. He was nowhere to be seen, so Bob walked slowly along his beat.

It was a lonely neighborhood. There were a lot of low frame houses, that were blackened by smoke.

Half of them had the appearance of being deserted.

A half-dozen railroad-tracks intersected each other.

There was a constant rumble of trains in the distance.

Piles of soft coal abounded everywhere.

Bob asked the first man he met if he had seen the officer. The reply was that he had passed him two minutes before.

He was then making straight for a row of railroad shanties. Bob hurried along, expecting to see him every minute.

But the row of shanties was reached, and he had not had a glimpse of him.

Bob stood a minute, and looked around.

He hardly knew whether to go back or wait for the officer. There was no one in sight except two or three Italians, who were at work on a coal-heap some distance up the track.

A solitary switchman stood at his post.

A moment later he disappeared in a wretched grog-shop on the corner.

Bob picked his way across the tracks.

He was obliged to crawl under two empty freight-cars and climb over an old engine. He was over in time to see a policeman's helmet disappear in the most disreputable-looking shanty of the whole lot.

Then there came a cry, and the sound of blows.

The officer was engaged in a struggle with some one.

Bob did not stop to think. He dashed into the shanty. A sight met his eyes that froze his blood with horror. A negro was sitting upon the officer's shoulder.

He was gripping his throat with both hands.

The officer was struggling.



Bob picked up a piece of wood that was lying on the floor of the shanty.

In a second it came down on the negro's skull.

The fellow relaxed his hold as another blow followed.

The next second he fell to the floor.

He was totally unconscious.

When the officer got his breath, they both examined the fellow.

The officer was loud in his regret that the blows had not killed him.

"Shure, he sprung on me back loike a cat, be jabers! An' me not dreamin' av seein' a 'craythure!'"

The officer was Fitzgerald.

Bob gave him the note, and then stood on guard while he read it.

When Fitzgerald had spelled out the writing, he turned to Bob eagerly.

"Kape an eye on him, me b'y! I'll be back in a minute. I'm jest goin' to the corner to turn in an alarum! Shure, it's not safe to be alone on the bate any longer!"

"Please hurry," was Bob's answer. "I've got to get back in twenty minutes. I've wasted some time in trying to find you."

The officer strode out.

He had only to pass the empty cars and walk two short blocks.

There was a call at that corner that connected with headquarters.

Bob seated himself on an old box, with his club still in his hand.

The negro was groaning now, so he was not concerned about him. He would have been glad to know who the fellow was.

But "all coons looked alike to him." It might be the member of the "Ten Threes," and it might be some other rascal.

While he was guessing, the fellow stirred.

Bob watched him eagerly.

There was a step behind his back, but he did not move. He was sure it was Fitzgerald, who had returned.

Then a heavy hand fell upon his collar.

A blanket of some kind was thrown over his head.

Bob could feel that he was slowly choking.

He tried to struggle, but it was of no use.

With his breath cut off so completely, he was utterly helpless.

A moment later a great faintness overcame him.

He could feel himself being carried from the shanty.

Then he seemed to be lifted into one of the empty cars.

He heard the dull thud of a padlock as it swung against the door.

After that he remembered nothing, except that he was stifling.

## CHAPTER XII.

### A COLLISION.

It was several hours before Bob returned to consciousness. When he did he was so dazed that he could not get his bearings.

A little later he sat up and looked around.

He must have struggled vigorously in choking, for he was free of the blanket.

He drew two or three deep breaths before he attempted to rise and explore his prison, which he remembered to be the empty freight-car.

A weakness that he could not understand seemed to be upon him; so, instead of rising to his feet, he attempted crawling.

There was a small chink in the side of the car, and as he put his eye to it a low cry escaped him. The stars were shining.

He had been there since morning. The thought appalled him, but not because of his own personal feelings.

He was wondering what the chief would say when he failed to return at the time appointed. He felt chagrined at his failure to obey orders.

Yet he could not blame himself for what had happened.

His eye was still to the chink when he suddenly heard footsteps. Two people were walking close to the car.

They hugged its sides in a suspicious manner.

When they were in front of the chink they stopped and began talking softly.

Bob removed his eye and put his ear to the chink.

He was on the alert to catch every syllable.

What he heard made his heart beat like a dozen trip-hammers.

The conversation was as follows:

"We've fooled 'em pretty slick this time, Pete! Now, all we've got to do is jump onto the first freight. A ride of ten miles or so will give us a fair start, and we can take our time about getting back to Denver."

"How'd yo' done git out, pard?"

It was a negro's voice.

There was a hoarse chuckle of laughter from the other fellow.

"The guards of their old pit were rotten as dirt! I broke out and the captain was there to help me. He'd been hangin' around for an hour tryin' to find the winder."

"In ten minutes more we'll be in safety."

"Be yo' sho' we isn't bein' shadded, pard?"

"Sure! I threw that hound, Decker, off the scent an hour ago. The others are on the jump after Mason and the captain."

"Where'd they sneak to, Bill?"

"Mason is at a little boarding-house on Central Avenue at present, and the captain is at the Albemarle. You'd orter see 'em, Pete! There's a good pair to draw to! Mason is playing the rôle of a star actress in hard luck, and the captain is a ranchman straight from Arizona! There isn't a spy in this bloomin' blasted old town that can pierce their disguises."

"An' where's de kid? De one dat was with Decker las' night! He's a game one, Bill! He dun got de right stuff in him!"

A thump of a brawny hand on the empty car made Bob jump with terror.

"He's in there! As dead as a door-nail!" was the brutal answer. "I 'tended to that little job myself. He won't do no more harm! His career is ended!"

Bob gritted his teeth at this information.

He had just sense enough to stifle even his breathing.

So Hyson had escaped from the house of detention!

He could imagine the dismay this would cause at headquarters.

"Wot time's de nex' freight? Seems how we've been hyar po'ful long time," said the negro uneasily.

"Ten minutes more. Don't get nervous, coon! They slow up here, so we can get on easy. It's a long train, too, so there won't no one see us."

There was just one minute's silence, in which the distant shriek of a locomotive could be heard.

"I'd like to know what they did to Maloney. He was one of our best men," said Hyson later. "He was a fool to go down in that cellar last night. He was dead sure his prisoners couldn't get out that way, but he wasn't sure of that panel."

There was another silence and another whistle.

Bob could hear the negro cursing softly.

"Mason will be surprised when she finds out that Maloney was a man," went on Hyson again. "It'll be a lesson to the hussy, tho'; she'll learn that the Ten Threes don't tell all their secrets to women."

The rumble of wheels could be heard distinctly now.

Bob began to shiver with apprehension. He knew the two empty freight-cars were standing on a switch; still, the noise of the approaching train made him uncomfortable.



There was just time for Hyson to get in another word.

It seemed impossible for him to keep from talking.

"Mason would be all right if she had a little more sand," he said, with a curse, "but what the deuce she wanted to balk for after she killed the gal is more'n I can see! She'd have had a cool ten thousand if her grit hadn't deserted her!"

Bob stood up in the car.

He was boiling with rage.

It seemed an outrage that he should be a prisoner at this minute.

If he could only get out of the car he might be able to capture them.

If not, he could at least jump onto the freight-train, and run the risk of being observed by them.

Then he could notify the chief from the nearest station.

The freight-train was rumbling down the long stretch of track now, and the rails were singing. Bob knew that it was still some distance off.

He had made up his mind what to do when it came nearer.

He did not dare to move now, for fear of betraying the fact that he was living.

As soon as the train was near enough to drown the sound of his movements he would throw all his strength against the door and try to force it open.

He might be too late to do more than give valuable information. Another shriek of the whistle showed that the train was at the switch.

The engine was puffing and snorting vigorously.

Suddenly Bob felt a strange sensation.

It was as if the world was coming to an end.

The next minute the locomotive of the freight-train struck one of the empty cars.

This, in turn, was forced back until it came in violent contact with the one in which Bob was confined.

A crash followed.

Bob was thrown violently forward against the end of the car.

Then, as a great splintering and smashing occurred, he was flung back again and out through a gaping aperture.

He landed in a bed of clay ten feet distant.

He was on his feet in an instant. There was one thought only in his mind.

The two crooks had been baffled in their attempt to escape.

If he was quick enough he might yet be able to capture them.

A crowd of trainmen were swarming about the wreck as he picked his way across the tracks.

He kept well in the shadow, so that the two rascals would not see him.

He caught a glimpse of the conductor berating the switchman. A minute later he was fairly flying down the street.

Fitzgerald, the officer, was standing by the signal-box. As Bob ran into his arms he gave a howl of terror.

"Faith, is it yerself, then! Shure, they do be after givin' yez up for dead!" he began.

Bob stopped him by giving him a peremptory order.

"Tell the chief to send a posse here at once! Tell him that Bob, the Shadow, is on the trail of Hyson and the nigger!"

There was a dark object flattened out on the roof of the next to the last car.

Two cars farther ahead he spied another.

In an instant he knew they were Hyson and the nigger.

They looked like anything in the world except human beings.

Bob stood for a moment in the shadow in deepest thought. He did not know how to go to work to capture the fellows.

A moment later the posse came tramping down the street.

Bob did not move his eyes from the dark objects except to shift from one to the other.

He wondered if the two criminals could hear the footsteps, and if they could guess what was likely to happen.

Then something occurred that made Bob's heart stop beating.

With a snort and a puff the engine started.

A minute more and the long train would be under way.

He turned and bawled with all his might for the officers to hurry.

The engine whistled at that moment and the shriek drowned his voice.

When it stopped the long train was moving faster, and Bob ran along the tracks, still keeping his eyes on the dark objects.

Suddenly a peculiar whistle cut the air of the night.

Bob answered it in an instant.

It was Decker's whistle.

The next instant a dozen policemen were at his side, and he was pointing out the two dark objects.

It was a peculiar race.

The freight-train was moving with moderate swiftness, but it was gaining speed with every minute.

The officers, on the other hand, were running alongside the track, yelling like Indians at the engineer, but all to no purpose.

At the last minute the brakeman on the rear platform saw them.

He understood at once, and a signal went flying through the long train until it reached the engine.

A snort from the locomotive followed.

Then the speed was slackened.

In less than a minute Bob was up the side of the car.

Nine of the twelve bluecoats scrambled up after him.

As the two rascals heard them they sprang to their feet like cats.

There was a sharp cracking of pistols, and one of the officers fell.

He was only slightly wounded.

But the cutthroats fared worse. One of them was shot in the leg. The other fell more seriously hurt.

Bob had a short consultation with Decker, and before the freight-train started again he was off like an arrow.

Decker, in turn, consulted with the sergeant.

Then he, too, disappeared.

He was on the war-path after an Arizona ranchman.

Bob fairly flew along the streets until he came in sight of a shabby building in another section of the city.

It was the boarding-house in Central Avenue that Hyson had mentioned. On the way to the place he consulted a clock.

It was quarter-past eleven.

The theaters were closing.

He selected a good position where he could watch the house, and, after ten minutes of watching, his patience was rewarded.

A group of chattering young men and women approached the steps.

He knew by their talk that they were from the chorus of some light-opera company.

They went into the house.

This assured him that it was the right place, as it was a professional boarding-house.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### CATCHING MISS MASON.

Bob hurried back to the railroad-tracks. Another engine had been sent for, and the trainmen were coupling it on.

The long line of loaded freight-cars had not been injured.

"The Shadow" paid no attention to the group of men about the engines.

He knew that his quarry would avoid their lanterns.

He began at the rear to scan each car in succession.



It was the place for a star actress in hard luck to be boarding.

He waited ten minutes longer.

A messenger boy was coming down the street.

As he started to go up the steps, Bob stepped from his hiding-place and spoke to him.

"Hello, George! Do you want to make a quarter?" he asked softly.

The boy stared at him a minute.

"Well, wot if I do?"

"I'll tell you how to do it! Swap clothes with me for a minute!"

"An' lose me uniform! Wot d'youse take me for?"

"Not a bit of it! You'll get it back, and, besides, here's the price! You can hold this fiver till I give it back! I just want to get into that house for a minute."

"Can't do it, Jimmy," said the boy, looking longingly at the fiver. "Dey're goin' ter send me out fer lobsters an' beer an' stuff. I git dis call every night. Dey'll know youse ain't me, an' dat'll queer youse."

"Rats! I'll tell 'em you're sick. That you've got the epizootic! Give me the togs, that's a good fellow! I'll give them back in a minute."

The boy took another look at the bill and consented.

The change of costumes was made in the area under the steps.

The next minute Bob had been admitted and was on his way to the second floor front.

He found quite a party assembled in the apartment.

"Hello, Bill! What the deuce made you so slow?" asked one of the men.

Bob squinted up one eye and changed his voice a little, as he answered:

"Go 'long, boss! I'se ain't Bill! Bill's got de pip dis evenin'. Wot kin I do fer youse ter earn me nickel?"

"Now who the devil said you would get a nickel?" asked the fellow.

The others listened for the messenger boy's answer.

"Dat's wot de last play-actor give me right here in dis block. How'd I know youse would give me de glad hand, boss? I t'ought a nickel wuz de limit wid all youse fellers!"

"Oh, we are not quite so mean as all that," spoke up one of the women quickly.

Bob held his breath.

He recognized the voice.

Miss Mason herself was coming toward him.

He glanced at her carelessly.

Her hair was bleached.

Further than that, she had on a gaudy dress and wore tinted glasses.

Just as she reached his side she spoke to the others.

"See here! This is my first night with you, ladies and gentlemen. It's only fair that I should blow the crowd. I've got just change enough to do it properly."

"But you'll be broke to-morrow!" said one of the other bleached blondes.

"Let to-morrow take care of itself!" chirped Miss Mason airily.

The next minute she was emptying a shabby pocketbook into the hand of "the Shadow."

"Bring two broiled lobsters and a big pail of beer. And there's a quarter for you, my boy. Now, go like the devil."

Bob did not wait to be urged.

He shot out like a comet.

Some one threw a tin pail after him as he ran down the stairs.

He had hard work to keep from kicking the bottom out of it.

When he reached the sidewalk he did not even look for the boy.

He knew the cost of the uniform was three ninety-eight.

He had no reason to think he would ever get back his "fiver."

As he raced down the street he dropped the "growler" in the gutter.

The "chorus" would have to wait awhile for their refreshments.

Fifteen minutes passed while he waited at the telephone at the corner for his orders from headquarters.

Then he received the joyful news that help was coming.

The next time he rang the bell there were two officers behind him, but Bob had neglected to bring the refreshments.

A maid opened the door, and the three went in.

It was evident by her unconcern that she was accustomed to late visitors.

Bob mounted the stairs and the detectives followed softly.

As he reached the second floor front the door flew open.

Miss Mason's voice cried out sharply: "Have you brought the lobsters?"

"You may call them that!"

Bob's voice fairly rippled with fun as he said it.

The two men behind him were anything but "lobsters."

There was a rush for the bogus messenger boy as he entered the room empty-handed.

"The little rascal! He has tricked us!"

"Throw him out of the window!"

"He's even lost the pail!"

"Who the mischief is he, anyway?"

"Where are the lobsters?"

The questions were fired at him like bombshells.

Bob said nothing at first. He was sidling toward Miss Mason.

The next second the woman gave a shriek that startled every one in the room.

At the same time she bounded forward to leave the apartment.

There was another scream as she reached the door.

She had bolted straight into the arms of a stalwart detective.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### JUSTICE.

It was a joyful hour for Bob when he was again at headquarters.

The detectives crowded around him, and the chief congratulated him. His experience in the freight-car had sobered them a little.

It was a desperate position for such a boy, but it only proved the stuff he was made of.

An hour later the capture of the "Arizona ranchman" was reported. Decker had trapped him cleverly, and he was now in the station-house in that precinct.

"Now, nothing remains but to prove the murder. We will wring a confession from some one soon," was the chief's exulting comment. The detective, Greenleaf, came in just then. He held a telegram in his hand which he passed to his superior. "It came an hour ago," he said victoriously. "Job took his time, but it is all there, chief. He did not let two or three dollars stop him from expressing his sentiments."

The chief opened the message and read it aloud.

It ran:

"I see through your game. You do not intend to divvy. Very well. I will expose your theft to your partner, Mr. Dudley. After this, get some one else to help you in your schemes. The meanest crook on earth would not back down on a promise."

"What do you make of that, Greenleaf?"

The answer came promptly.

"Alibi Job thinks Van Camp lost his train on purpose. They must have planned that deal together. We know, but Job doesn't know, why Van Camp failed to connect. Thank fortune, the ruse has served our purpose!"

"Does Van Camp know of this?"



"I'm afraid he does. After I had intercepted this message he got another. They tell me at the hotel that he is raving crazy."

"I wonder what Mr. Dudley thinks now?"

The chief spoke sadly.

A moment later his question was answered.

Mr. Dudley himself came rushing into the office.

His first words were all that the chief needed.

"You were right, he was guilty! He stole the money and the diamonds," he cried excitedly. "He has confessed the whole thing and shot himself. He says he took the cash so he could run away from that woman, Miss Mason!"

"And she murdered that girl in her employer's office when she found her in the way. She intended to steal enough to follow Van Camp," said another voice.

It was one of the detectives who had just entered the office.

Every eye was turned upon him, so he continued briefly.

"The woman has confessed that she killed the girl; but she was ably assisted by that fellow Maloney."

"How did they do it?"

"Choked her with her own hair," was the extraordinary answer. "They wound it around her throat like a flash of lightning. It choked without leaving a mark except that slight discoloration."

"Then why did they not rob the safe?" asked another voice.

"That part is a mystery yet," was the answer; "but I am pretty fairly sure that I have the explanation. Mason grew too nervous to work the combination."

The chief looked relieved.

Here was a batch of criminals indeed. The only one who had escaped was Alibi Job, and it was for Mr. Dudley to say whether he should be arrested. The cripple had been questioned, but he was half-witted, and his evidence was useless, and he was released.

After his partner's funeral, Mr. Dudley let the matter of the robbery rest, so "Alibi Job" remained at liberty. The chief, however, gave the railroad president a private warning, so the fellow was obliged to leave his position.

He disappeared for a time, but he was never forgotten.

Miss Mason died in prison from an attack of pneumonia.

This was better than twenty years at hard labor in the penitentiary, which was the fate that was meted out to Maloney.

The other two members of the Ten Threes got ten years each.

But, a little later, the captain escaped in a miraculous manner.

"Bob, the Shadow," was now enshrined in the hearts of the detectives, and the chief looked upon him as one of the most valuable men in the department. He had made his first catch, had covered himself with glory, and was ready for more work. No seasoned veteran could have shown more nerve than he.

Further, he had proved himself capable in every emergency.

In the chief's eyes Bob was a young wonder, and when a chief of police thinks this about a boy or a man he is pretty sure to have implicit confidence in him. So Bob's success in his first great case had inspired his chief with this confidence. Therefore, when the doorman called out next morning: "Hey, Bob, the chief wants you in his private office," the other detectives knew there was a big case on. "That kid," said one of them, "has a dead graft. The old man is plum gone on him."

## CHAPTER XV,

### THE SECOND CASE.

"Here is a case that will tax your cleverness, Bob," remarked the chief of the Chicago police. "It is the strangest case we have had in some time."

The youngest detective stood, cap in hand, to await his orders.

A man entered the office.

It was Mr. Decker.

He and Bob were great friends, but now they only nodded to each other. The great chief had something to say, and it was for them to be silent.

"This case of the lake steamer is a curious one, in this way," went on the chief; "we have the passenger-list, and every name on it is beyond suspicion. But I will begin at the beginning, and tell you the details of a crime which seems to be plunged in mystery."

He turned to his desk and picked up the report of one of his men.

After a hasty glance over the paper he was ready with his story.

"The *Lake Breeze* is one of our best steamers, and this is the first time a tragedy has ever been connected with her. She left Manistee Tuesday morning with a fair quota of passengers, among whom was Miss Ada Sterling, the daughter of one of the richest men in Chicago."

"He is a multi-millionaire stock-raiser," said Decker, as the chief paused, "and Miss Ada was one of the belles of Chicago."

"Miss Sterling's friends saw her on board," went on the chief, "but when the *Lake Breeze* arrived at Chicago this morning the stateroom occupied by the young lady was empty. Her hand-bag, containing valuable jewelry and cash, had disappeared. There were several splashes of blood about the room, and the window was broken."

In an instant Bob was eager to be on the trail.

"It is presumed that a murder was committed and that the body was thrown overboard," went on the chief.

"Yet it was a bright moonlight night!" broke in the old detective.

"The lookout claims he saw nothing unusual," was the answer.

"There are none so blind as those who won't see," muttered Decker.

Bob looked at him sharply.

He could almost read his mind.

"You are right there, Decker. I cannot understand such blindness," said the chief. "Still, there is absolutely no proof that the fellow is lying."

"We must find some!"

The old detective muttered the words savagely.

It was plain to be seen in what direction his suspicions were pointing.

"I sent Greenleaf and Tracy down at once, as soon as the case was reported," began the chief again. "You were busy, Decker, or I should have sent you instead. I am sorry that you were not the first to get a look at that stateroom."

"Is the boat under surveillance?"

"Yes. My men are still there, but the captain begs me to release her by six to-morrow morning. He claims that it will injure her reputation if she cannot make her trip as usual."

"If there is anything to be found out we ought to be able to find it out by that time," said the detective. "Or, if not, what do you say to my taking a trip on her?"

"Exactly what I intended asking you to do," answered the chief promptly. "Moreover, I wish you to take Bob as your assistant."

The youth gave a jump for joy.

He could not restrain his happiness.

He waited breathlessly for Decker's answer.

"Bob suits me to a T! He is the nerviest chap on the force! You couldn't have given me a better assistant!"

At Decker's words the great man had smiled pleasantly.

"Bob certainly did good work on his first case, Decker," said the chief. "The capture of those three members of the Ten Threes gang was due largely to his efforts."

"Indeed it was! I played second fiddle in that deal."



laughed Decker. "All the glory in that case belongs to 'the Shadow.'"

Decker and the chief were now conniving together.

"I would like to see the passenger-list, if you please, chief,"

The chief handed it to him.

Decker scanned it critically.

"All well-known people! That complicates matters, but it strengthens my suspicions."

"You mean that you think some one on the *Lake Breeze* is guilty?"

"I do."

"I have known the captain for years. He bears an excellent reputation."

"And the other officers?"

"Our men have looked up their records, and can find nothing against them."

"Who discovered the crime, chief?"

It was Bob who spoke.

"The young girl's father, Mr. Eben Sterling. He met the boat, and when his daughter failed to appear he got the number of her stateroom and went to call her."

"Was the door unlocked?"

"Yes. He opened it, after rapping. They say the sight that met his gaze nearly bereft him of his senses."

"Naturally it would. Then what did he do?" asked Decker.

"All that a parent could," was the chief's reply. "Notified the police and had every officer of the boat put under arrest. The passengers had disappeared, so he could not hold them, but the passenger-list was forwarded to me at once, and since six o'clock my men have been busy in that direction."

"How much were her jewels worth?" asked Decker, after he had done a little thinking.

"About ten thousand dollars, her father says, and, besides, she had nearly a thousand dollars in money."

"Altogether too much for a woman to be traveling with. She might have known she would be tempting some crook or other."

"She has a million in her own right, and is used to carrying a large amount. The wonder is that she has escaped so long," said the chief. "Chicago crooks have been merciful to her, in my opinion."

"Simply because they have been too busy elsewhere. She has been overlooked in the shuffle," said Decker, scowling.

"Now, the question is, what will you do first?" began the chief. "I confess I haven't a suggestion for you, Mr. Decker."

"You say the passengers and officers have been looked after. Suppose I begin at the deck-hands," suggested the detective.

"There is just one name on this list that bothers me," said the chief, taking the list from Decker's hand.

He turned the paper over until he found it.

"The name of 'Loren Edmunds' appears upon this list, and Loren Edmunds was the young lady's lover. He has not been seen nor heard of since the murder, but his friends account for his absence in a legitimate way. They say his name on the passenger-list is an error."

Decker jumped to his feet.

"Then there is a clue!" he said quickly. "I shall start at once to find Loren Edmunds."

The chief stared a minute.

Bob looked from one to the other.

Just then a clerk stuck his head in the door and made an announcement.

What he said was:

"A gentleman by the name of Mr. Loren Edmunds to see you, sir! Shall I show him in or tell him you are busy?"

The two detectives exchanged glances.

"Show him in," said the chief, without any hesitation.

The next minute a stylishly dressed young man entered the office.

## CHAPTER XVI.

### THE "LAKE BREEZE."

"This is the chief of police?"

"Yes, sir. At your service."

"I am Loren Edmunds. May I see you in private, sir?"

"If you so prefer; but these are two of my detectives, who are working on the case of your fiancée, Miss Sterling."

"In that case, it is as well that they remain, I presume, as what I have to say may give them a clue to the murderer of Miss Sterling."

The young man sat down as he spoke.

His face was bathed in perspiration. It was evident that he was laboring under great emotion. The detectives waited until he had calmed himself before they asked any questions.

Bob eyed him sharply.

He was half-hidden by Decker, so the young man did not detect his scrutiny.

"You have seen the passenger-list of the *Lake Breeze* for Tuesday night," began the young man.

The chief nodded his head.

"And you have seen my name?"

The chief nodded again.

"It is an error. I was not there," said the young man, almost savagely. "I said good-by to Miss Sterling at Manistee. I did not come home with her!"

"Would to God that you had," muttered the chief solemnly. "It is possible that you might have saved her!"

The young man gave him a sharp glance.

"Thank you," he murmured nervously. "Those are comforting words, sir. I am overjoyed to see that you believe my story."

"Such a thought as doubting it had not entered my mind," said the chief.

As he spoke he glanced carelessly at Mr. Decker.

"I left her at Manistee and came home partly by rail and partly by boat. I got in at eight this morning. Two hours afterward I learned of the murder."

"Of course you can show proof of all this, Mr. Edmunds?"

The chief spoke respectfully.

He appeared to regret being obliged to ask the question.

Mr. Edmunds drew sundry tickets and coupons from his pocket.

"If these are not sufficient, I can find others," he said promptly. "Two of our best-known Chicago gentlemen were my traveling companions."

The chief took their names.

He seemed to be acting under protest.

When the formality was over, he turned to his visitor smilingly. "Have you a theory as to this horror, Mr. Edmunds?"

"I have," was the young man's answer. "Of course, for a time, I was too stunned to think, and even now I may be on the wrong track entirely."

"Still, I would be glad to hear it," responded the chief kindly.

Mr. Edmunds wiped his brow and turned down his coat-collar.

In spite of his efforts to be calm, he was trembling all over.

"Some one, a crook from Chicago, I believe, came down on that boat. He signed my name on the boat's register, and occupied the stateroom next to Miss Sterling."

"A plausible theory, and one that we shall act upon," said the chief promptly.

Decker had already risen and was buttoning his coat.

Bob took a final glance at the young man, and then rose and stood beside him.

Mr. Edmunds stared a little at these signs of enterprise.

He seemed to suddenly become more nervous.

"Go on board the *Lake Breeze* and examine those two staterooms," commanded the chief. "You may be able to judge the nature of the murderer. All criminals have their



peculiarities, you know, and by their methods you may often determine the class they belong to."

"After which it is not so hard to locate them," added Decker. "If he has left any traces behind I shall surely be able to make a fair guess as to whether he was a sneak-thief or a member of some other order of criminals."

"But have not the staterooms already been examined over and over?" asked Mr. Edmunds.

"Yes, by our other men, but not by these two," answered the chief. "These two are the shrewdest detectives on the force, if not in the world, Mr. Edmunds."

As the great chief spoke he watched the young man keenly.

A flush was rising to his face and his eyes began to roam.

"Then I have great faith that they will fathom this mystery," said the young man uneasily, "and I assure you I will give you any assistance in my power. You have only to command me."

"Thank you, sir. We will remember your offer," remarked the chief politely.

A moment later the young man left the office.

"Well, what do you think, Decker?"

The chief asked the question softly.

The detective shrugged his shoulders. He was decidedly puzzled.

"Shall I shadow him, sir?" asked Bob, the Shadow, eagerly.

The chief smiled.

"Not so fast, my boy! Give him time to calm his fears a little. We have convinced him that he is not a suspect in the case. After you have looked the *Lake Breeze* over carefully I may want you to trail him."

After a few more orders the two left the office.

Bob wore a newsboy's costume and carried a bundle of papers. Decker, on the other hand, was dressed like a wealthy gentleman. He was visiting the *Lake Breeze* to look over her accommodations, pretending that he anticipated taking a trip up Lake Michigan. Long before they reached the dock they parted company. When they met again Decker was accompanied by the purser of the *Lake Breeze*.

They were looking at the stateroom next to the one where the murder had been committed. Bob walked up to his friend and asked him to buy a paper.

"Full account of the murder on the *Lake Breeze*!" he yelled shrilly.

The purser jumped.

His bronzed face grew ghastly.

He made a lunge at Bob, but Decker stepped between them.

"Don't mind him, I beg of you," he said, in a suave tone.

"Git off'er the boat!" roared the purser angrily.

"The boy is only trying to sell his papers," interposed Decker again.

"He ain't got no business on board the *Lake Breeze*! Dum his impudence, anyway!" squalled the purser. "The idea of his yellin' about the murder when I'm a-tryin' to let my staterooms."

"I know all about the murder. The papers are full of it," said Decker again. "A little thing like that does not scare me, purser."

"Oh, if it don't make no difference ter you, he kin yell if he likes," said the fellow, better naturedly. "But most folks would git skittish to be reminded of such a thing, particularly as the stateroom you've chosen is right next to the one in question."

Decker had entered the stateroom and was looking it over critically.

"That murder must have given you all a turn," he said coolly. "Have you any idea who did it, purser?"

The fellow put his tongue in his cheek.

He was trying to look knowing.

Decker gave him a quick glance, and went on examining the mirror.

"The chap that slept in this room is responsible, in my way of thinking," said the purser finally.

"And that was Loren Edmunds, her lover, the newspapers say. Now, what in the world could have been his intention?"

He had finished his inspection by this time and both were just leaving the room.

A family party was just coming up the stairs to the saloon.

The next minute Bob appeared again with his bundle of papers.

"Full account of de horrible murder on de *Lake Breeze*!" he bawled.

The purser uttered an oath and darted after him.

In a second Decker had slipped inside of the murdered girl's stateroom.

As he opened the door he came face to face with a man. It was Greenleaf.

Decker put up one finger and then turned the key in the lock.

"By Jove! That kid is clever! Now if he will give that duffer a five-minute chase I'll be able to take a look around these quarters, Greenleaf."

"You won't find anything—I can't," said the other detective sourly. "I've ripped everything to flinders, and there ain't a sign of a clue. There is only one thing sure, and that is, whoever did the deed must have come in at the window."

"Or gone out that way," said Decker, with a sharp glance.

"The door was unlocked, you know, when the *Lake Breeze* got in this morning."

"They must have dragged the body through that window," said Greenleaf decidedly.

A shrill whistle from Bob terminated Decker's investigations.

The whistle told him he must get out.

The chase was ended.

When the purser came back he was purple with rage.

He found Decker waiting for him exactly where he had left him.

"You are sure the boat will be able to make her regular trip?" said Decker blandly.

The purser nodded.

He was too much out of breath to speak.

"Then I will occupy this room."

There was another nod.

Five minutes later the detective walked off the boat.

He had a round-trip ticket for Manistee in his pocket.

He was to occupy the stateroom next to the one in which the murder had been committed.

A half an hour later he telephoned to the purser.

This time he engaged a stateroom for his son, a lad of sixteen.

It was Number 13.

The fatal stateroom!

When the berth was secured, he chuckled softly.

He wondered if Bob's nerve was proof against such ghastly quarters.

## CHAPTER XVII.

### THE NEW WAITER.

When Decker saw Bob again they repaired to a first-class restaurant.

"The Shadow" had slipped into a hallway and made one of his "lightning changes."

He was dressed in a neat blue suit, with the fatigue-cap sitting jauntily upon his curly hair.

No one would ever have suspected him of selling papers.

He looked more like a rich man's son at home from some military school on a vacation.

"What is it, Bob? What did you discover?" asked Decker, after he had ordered their dinner.



Bob gave a sharp glance around. There was no one within hearing-distance.

"Only this, Mr. Decker," he said, in a low voice. "One of the deck-hands was drunk, and I saw him flashing a big wad. The others were all jollying him about having so much boodle."

The detective looked interested. "Which one was he?" he asked.

"He is a dago deck-cleaner, as near as I can make out. A big black brute of a fellow, in my opinion."

"Just the kind to rob and murder a defenseless woman," muttered Decker.

"If he was put up to it, yes."

The waiter was coming, so the conversation ended. As he placed the dishes, the two detectives talked about the weather. When he had gone Bob continued his story.

"You know every one on the boat is under arrest, from the captain down, Mr. Decker?"

The detective nodded.

"The captain is the only one who has been allowed to go ashore."

Decker nodded again.

"Well, after I had got aboard I tried to do a little spying, but gee, didn't they watch me, though! The deck-hands, I mean. And the first officer glared at me as though I was the murderer."

"They're all nervous, I guess! They don't know what minute they'll be locked up."

"The 'cop' that let me on gave me a tip to go easy. I had to show him my badge before he'd believe I was a detective. Then he told me where to find the deck-hands' quarters."

"Up forward?"

"Yes. I overheard them talking; and say, but ain't they a tough crowd! I heard one fellow say that it served Miss Sterling right. That it wasn't a square deal for one person to have so much money."

"The envious dog! No doubt they murdered her, then!" began Decker.

A kick under the table from Bob made him break off instantly. Loren Edmunds was just entering the restaurant, accompanied by a stylish young lady.

The two detectives watched him furtively.

Edmunds was so absorbed in his companion that he did not notice them.

A moment later the stylish couple disappeared into a private dining-room.

"Well, I'll be blowed! That's quick work, ain't it, Decker?" blurted Bob softly. "He's no sooner off with the old love than he's on with the new! Gee! He must be a beaut! I wonder that the women look at him!"

The old detective said nothing. He was thinking deeply.

Here seemed to be a motive, if not a clue.

The two were apt to accompany each other.

"By ginger! I'm going to try something, Decker!" whispered Bob again. "I'm going to try to get into that private dining-room!"

"A good idea, and easily done," said Decker quickly. "I know the proprietor well. Come on, Bob!"

The two rose hastily and left the table.

Decker placed the amount of the meal on the desk as he passed it.

Five minutes later they were both in the private office of the owner of the restaurant.

Decker lost no time in telling him what was wanted.

Mr. Ryan, the proprietor, was only too willing to help them.

The consequence was that ten minutes later the waiter in the private dining-room was called to the office, and he and Bob had a chat together.

The waiter gave Bob his order for the couple.

Then he gave him his sack coat, apron, and napkin.

The next move was to inform the head waiter of what was going on.

When Bob left the office he went straight to the kitchen.

Mr. Loren Edmunds was smiling sweetly at his companion when the new waiter entered.

He glanced up for a minute in some surprise, but, as the order was properly served, he had no comments to offer.

Bob laid the covers as skilfully as an old hand.

When he pulled the cork of a "cold bottle" he did it with a flourish.

He was still busying himself about the table when the young lady spoke.

The first tones of her voice showed him that she was nervous.

"Did you see the two detectives yourself, Loren?" she asked.

"Yes, dearest; and what do you think—one was a mere boy," was the answer.

"Then they will never be able to fathom the mystery."

"I am not so sure! The chief said they were his cleverest men."

"I wish I knew what clue they were working on."

"I can tell you. They are looking for the fellow who occupied the next stateroom."

Bob pricked up his ears.

He had detected a chuckle.

He would have given the world to have seen Mr. Edmunds' face at that minute.

But a look might betray him.

He stared in another direction.

"The lake will tell no tales."

It was the young lady who spoke.

She had lowered her voice almost to a whisper.

Bob looked around quickly.

In an instant he understood.

They had been drinking before they came in, and the heat of the place was affecting them.

In a second he was at the table, refilling both glasses.

"You can leave us, waiter," said Edmunds, after a minute.

Bob threw his napkin over his arm and backed away respectfully.

As soon as he was outside of the door he did a little thinking.

There was a narrow space between the private dining-room and the restaurant proper.

He glided down it noiselessly until he was beside the couple. Only a thin partition separated them.

He could hear what they were saying almost as plainly as if he had been in their presence.

It was fortunate for him that he had no one else to wait on.

"I can't help feeling sorry for her, Loren," said the woman, after a minute. "Of course, she wasn't to blame for being in love with you."

"Of course not. She couldn't help it," chuckled her companion coarsely.

Bob heard the clink of glasses.

A maudlin laugh followed.

"No; you are irresistible, Loren," giggled the girl. "What a pity it is that you haven't enough money!"

"Nor you either, May! We could be so happy if we were rich!"

There was another clink of two glasses and more foolish laughter.

"Well, I must leave you, petty," said Edmunds, after a minute. "Got to pay an important visit, you know, so you mustn't detain me."

"But you will come up to-night, without fail, darling?"

"Oh, of course! That is, if I have luck, sweetness! You mustn't forget that I am going into dangerous quarters!"

"Pshaw! You are as safe in Terry's cellar as you are in a palace, Loren! I shall expect you at eleven, so don't you dare to disappoint me!"



"All right, then; but remember and keep your mouth shut, May! I'll see you to the car. Hello! Where in thunder is that waiter?"

Bob glided back and entered the door.

His face was a perfect blank.

As he entered, Edmunds called to him.

"Give me my bill!"

The fellow spoke pompously.

His nervous manner had entirely left him. "Yes, sir. Just a minute, sir!"

Bob darted from the room.

He returned with the bill made out by the head waiter.

Edmunds pulled a large roll of bills from his pocket and paid the amount.

Bob waited until they had left the restaurant, and then bolted for the office.

"I won't charge you anything for my services, sir," he said to the proprietor, with a grin.

Decker helped him out of his coat and apron.

"Did you learn anything, Bob?" he asked excitedly.

"Enough to hang that dude, unless I am very much mistaken!" was the answer. "If he isn't the murderer, he is surely an accomplice."

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### SOME ARRESTS.

The moment they were outside, Bob told Decker what he had learned.

Ten minutes later they were both on the way to "Terry's Cellar."

"It is the toughest place in Chicago," explained Decker, as they walked along. "It will be as much as our lives are worth to go into that place, Bob."

So many exciting events await our attention that we must not linger in the telling.

In the disguise of "old-clo'" men, Decker and Bob visited Terry's den, down near the river, where thieves congregated and disposed of their plunder.

Here our friends had quite a lively time of it, and saw Loren Edmunds in friendly conversation with the rascally proprietor. Luck also came their way, for Decker ran across a brown-paper parcel that had been carefully stowed away.

This, upon being opened, was found to contain a costly diamond bracelet, with the name of Ada Sterling upon it.

While they were leaving the neighborhood a couple of crooks set upon them, and Decker was knocked out, being taken unawares; but Bob had his gun ready, and, with the assistance of a couple of officers, who, fortunately, turned up just then, was able to bag both the rascals.

When the ambulance came, a patrol-wagon came with it.

Bob was obliged to leave his friend and go to the station-house. He had to tell the sergeant on duty what he and Decker were doing.

When he left the station-house he went to headquarters.

He had in his possession Decker's badge, money, and papers.

He also carried the diamond bracelet.

"We are pretty near the bottom of this case, Bob."

The chief spoke these words after "The Shadow" had told his story.

Bob's eyes stuck out.

He was anxious to know what the other detectives had discovered.

The chief enlightened him.

"We have proven that Loren Edmunds talked with a young man on a street corner in Manistee the day before the *Lake Breeze* sailed on her last trip," he began.

Bob looked puzzled.

He could not see anything extraordinary in this statement.

The chief's next words threw some light on the subject.

"That same young fellow took passage on the boat. It was he who occupied the stateroom next to Miss Sterling."

"And robbed her!" suggested Bob, in great excitement.

The chief nodded.

"We think so," he said soberly.

"And did the young fellow leave the boat in the night?" asked Bob again.

The chief opened his eyes wide.

"That is one belief," he said, finally.

"Then who murdered the woman? Not the young man, surely?"

"No; it was some one on the boat; or, rather, they murdered her together. Then the young man left the boat, taking the plunder with him."

"Which he turned over to Loren Edmunds?"

The chief nodded again.

"Then it must have been the purser!"

Bob spoke decidedly.

He knew of no one else who could manage such an affair on a boat unless it was the captain or the purser. And the captain was innocent.

He had proven that beyond a doubt.

He knew as little about the affair as an absent person.

The purser, on the contrary, had been forced to admit some knowledge.

In fact, the detective, Mr. Greenleaf, had "put him through a course of sprouts," with the result that he had made several contradictory statements.

"The thing is in a nutshell now," went on the chief. "We must prove the purser's guilt, and then find the occupant of that stateroom."

"The one who registered the name of Loren Edmunds?"

"Yes."

"Why did he do that, chief?"

Bob asked for information.

"Because Loren had already planned to come home another way. He knew he could prove an alibi, which would greatly complicate matters."

"And make it look as if he was a victim, rather than an accomplice?"

"Exactly."

"Well, his plans have failed."

"As the best-laid plans of criminals often do. But now, Bob, I have something else for you to do. Can you do it by yourself, without Mr. Decker?"

"I can try!"

"I would not send you alone if I had another man."

"I'm not afraid! I've learned a lot from Decker! I'll do what you tell me to do, chief, no matter what happens."

"No faithful servant of the people could do more, Bob," said the great man, as he patted him on the back. "If you always obey orders, you will some day be a great detective."

"You think so, sir?"

"I am absolutely sure of it. Now, listen, Bob, and heed my instructions. If you succeed in this undertaking, it will add great glory to your reputation."

"Then I shall succeed, sir!"

The chief turned to his desk.

"Decker reports that Loren Edmunds dined in Ryan's restaurant to-night with a lady."

"Yes, sir; I served them."

"So he notified me. Would you know him again, Bob?"

"Yes, sir; anywhere and at any time."

The chief tore a scrap from Decker's report.

"There is her address. I want you to watch her, Bob. But, remember, you must be on hand at six in the morning."

"You mean that I am to take that trip on the *Lake Breeze*, whether or no? That is, I am to go, even if Decker cannot go with me?"

"Yes; that is what I mean. Decker will not be out for a day or two. Greenleaf will disguise himself and occupy



stateroom number eleven. The purser will not make the trip, so it will not matter."

Bob opened his eyes.

"The purser has been locked up," said the chief quietly. "I did it an hour ago. He is a suspicious character in the case. I have also locked up a deck-hand who has been talking."

"A dago?"

"I believe so."

"Then you have the two culprits, in my opinion; but I'm off now to watch 'Miss May McFarland.'"

He glanced at the address on the paper as he spoke.

It was a well-known apartment-house in a quiet part of the city.

It was a relief to get back into civilization.

Bob had seen quite as much of the slums as he wished to.

As he rode up-town in a car, he looked like a different boy.

He was clean, well-dressed, and wore his cap with the gold buttons.

The only worry on his mind was the fate of his friend Decker.

It was after midnight when he reached the neighborhood of the flat.

The building was ablaze with light, and people were coming and going.

There was a ragged newsboy just across the street from the building.

He walked on, whistling, and scraped his acquaintance.

"What's goin' on over yonder? Anything happening?" he asked curiously.

The newsboy gave him a quick look. He was glad to talk to somebody.

"There's been a weddin', and the folks is jest goin' home," he said pleasantly.

"Which floor?"

"De fourt'. Can't youze tell by de lights?"

"That's so! They are pretty light up there, ain't they? Then they must be havin' a funeral on the fifth floor?"

"Why?"

"'Cause it's so dark."

The newsboy laughed.

"Mebbe they be; I dunno," he said good-naturedly. "I ain't seed no hearse, nor no corpse—nor nuthin'!"

It was Bob's turn to laugh.

\*This made them good friends immediately.

They both stood for a minute and stared up at the lighted windows.

"Gee! Wouldn't you like to see a swell wedding?" asked Bob, after a minute.

"You bet!"

"Just think of the lights, and the flowers, and the cake, and wine, and silver, and jewelry! I'd give a dollar for a look into that flat!"

"So would I!"

"How can we work it?"

"Thunder! We can't! Who the dickens ever heard of such a t'ing?" said the boy, grinning.

"Rats! I'll bet we can do it! Come on and try!" urged Bob.

"Come off! Wot youze givin' us? Do youze want ter git run in?" asked the newsboy, still grinning.

Another carriage-load of gay young people rolled away from the door as he spoke.

A second later the majority of the lights on the fourth floor went out.

It was plainly to be seen that the festivities were over.

"Dat's all you 'n' me will see of de weddin'," said the newsboy dolefully. "Dey'll chuck cart-loads of cake into de ash-barrel ter-morrer, an' youze kin bet I'll be aroun' ter call on me fr'end de janitor."

Bob pricked up his ears.

"Do you know the janitor of that building?" he asked excitedly.

The newsboy put on a pompous air.

"Sure I knows him!" he said promptly. "He's Terence O'Connor, an' he's an old fr'end of de fam'ly. I'd take youze over an' interdooce yer ef it wasn't a trifle too late fer sech er function."

"I'll make it right with you if you will," said Bob, jingling some money in his pocket.

The boy pricked up his ears.

At that same minute there was the thud of a garbage-can on the sidewalk.

Terence O'Connor was bringing a first instalment of the day's waste from the cellar of the big building.

A minute later the two boys were across the street, and the newsboy had given the promised introduction.

The janitor was a jolly Irishman.

So far all was well.

Bob lived in hopes of getting into the building, upon the fifth floor of which lived May McFarland.

## CHAPTER XIX.

### THE WOMAN IN THE CASE.

It took a five-dollar bill to accomplish that feat, but Bob was plentifully supplied with money.

The janitor was nervous when he saw Bob's badge.

He let him go up-stairs in fear and trembling.

The different apartments in the building were quiet now, and above the fourth floor all was darkness.

A ray of light in the halls kept Bob from stumbling.

As he reached the fifth floor he stood still and listened intently.

In one of the rooms he detected low voices.

"She told him to be sure and come," he thought, as he listened, "so of course that is Miss McFarland and Loren Edmunds."

He slipped close to the door and put his ear to the key-hole.

This was not a dishonorable act, inasmuch as they were accomplices in murder.

The first words of their conversation made his heart beat high.

It was all he could do to stifle his breathing.

What he heard was this:

"Have they raided Terry's?"

"No. It was a false alarm; but I was half-scared to death. I made good time, I can tell you, getting across Terry's cellar!"

"And how did the young fellow fare when they all pounced on his bag?"

"The Lord only knows! I didn't wait to see! I tell you, May, it's my last visit to Terry's!"

"I guess Chicago's getting too hot for us, anyway, Loren. Suppose we get what we can together and make a break for New York or 'Frisco?"

"A good idea! We'll start to-morrow. That is, if luck is our way between this and sunrise."

"You mean to play to-night?"

"Yes."

"Where?"

"At Martin's. That's the safest place for a man in my position at present."

"Yes; Martin will get us out of a hole, if it comes to that; but how about to-morrow? Shall we go together?"

The woman's voice was growing tender.

"What nonsense, May! Do you want to queer the game? We've been seen together too much already!"

"You are tiring of me, Loren."

There was the sound of a sob.

Bob heard a yawn, and a puff of cigar smoke came through the keyhole.



"Don't get silly, May!"

The fellow spoke coarsely.

"You are as good as any of them, but I tire of all women."

"You are a brute!"

"I know it."

"I wish I had never met you! Of all the low-lived scoundrels in the world, you are——"

"The all-around champion! That's all right, May—pile it on!"

"You used to say that you loved me, Loren!"

"Perhaps I did! I must have thought so, or I would have married Miss Sterling."

"Yet you said you hated her!"

The woman's voice showed agony.

"Bosh! A man is liable to say anything. She was as good as any of them. I guess I was a fool not to have stuck to her and married her."

"Instead of planning to have her murdered!"

The words were as sharp as a knife.

A chair fell over, and Bob heard the fellow spring to his feet.

"Curse you! I did not plan to have her murdered! I planned to have her robbed!" cried Edmunds coarsely.

"And one was impossible without the other!"

"How so?"

"She carried a pistol, and you knew it, Loren!"

A harsh laugh followed.

Bob was doing some rapid thinking.

His brain was in a whirl. He could hardly listen.

"Pshaw! I knew you were not afraid of that toy, May! It wouldn't be the first time that you had looked down the barrel of a pistol."

"For your sake, Loren!"

The words were spoken bitterly.

There was another curse and a rattling of the furniture.

"Oh, if you are going on that way, I'll go home!" said Edmunds.

Bob darted back from the door toward a small closet.

He waited a second, but the door was not opened.

A moment later he stole back to the keyhole.

The woman had broken down, and was crying bitterly.

Bob would have given the world for a few words with Decker at that minute.

He was at his wits' ends.

He did not know what to do next.

A movement inside of the room decided him.

He darted back into the closet, and almost closed the door. Through a tiny crack he watched for what was to follow.

Five minutes passed, and then the door opened slowly.

Loren Edmunds came out, smoking a cigar.

He sauntered down the stairs, with his hands in his pockets.

Bob waited until he heard the outer door closed.

He was just stealing out of the closet, when the door of the apartment opened again.

Of course, he fully expected to see the woman.

It was all he could do to stifle a whistle of surprise.

The person who appeared looked like a young fellow of twenty. He was faultlessly dressed in a frock coat and light trousers. There was a high hat on his head, and he, too, was smoking.

Bob would not have been suspicious had it not been for one act.

The young man took a key from his pocket and locked the door behind him.

This act showed Bob that it was not a man at all.

It was May McFarland, in male attire.

As she walked swiftly down the stairs, he followed her like a shadow.

Two minutes after she reached the street he, too, had left the building.

Terence O'Connor would wait in vain to say adieu to him that night.

The poor fellow would be mystified, but mystery would not hurt him.

Two blocks from the apartment building, Loren Edmunds joined the woman.

The two hailed a cab that happened to be passing.

Bob waited until they were inside, and then made a record in sprinting.

He caught up with the cab, and sprang up on the back.

He landed as lightly as a feather. Even the driver did not see him.

The cab stopped before a house in a handsome neighborhood.

Loren Edmunds and his companion hurried up the steps of the house.

When the cab drove off Bob rode a block farther.

Then he slid off quietly, and went back and investigated.

The place was a gambling-house. It was one of the crook-est and quietest places of the sort in the city.

Once more Bob was in doubt.

He did not know what to do next.

They would hardly let a boy into a house of that description. Further, he could not even try to gain an entrance.

He did not know the password.

He stood before the house for a moment, in deep thought.

Five minutes later he was in a drug-store, telephoning to headquarters.

He was obliged to have orders before going any farther.

## CHAPTER XX.

### TRACKED.

The chief was not at the office, but his assistant answered Bob's inquiry.

The boy's news had created a sensation at headquarters.

Bob was still watching the door of the gambling-house, when a cab drove up to the curb.

Two gentlemen in evening dress sprang out.

Bob walked up to them coolly.

The two men stared at him.

Then one of them smiled.

A few brief words were exchanged between them.

A minute later the two men ran up the steps to the gambling-house.

Bob was left outside.

He had received his orders.

As he went back to his post he smiled to himself.

They were two of the best detectives on the force, and he felt sure that they would arrest both Edmunds and Miss McFarland.

But in this he was doomed to disappointment.

After ten minutes the two men came out.

They were chagrined and angry.

"That's what comes of setting a boy up as a sleuth!" remarked one of them savagely. "There isn't a sign of that couple in there!"

Bob heard the words.

"But I saw them go in," he said quickly.

"You should have seen them go out!" answered the detective crossly. "No doubt they went while you were in the drug-store telephoning to headquarters."

Bob's heart grew sick.

He had not thought of that.

In a moment he was disgusted at his own stupidity.

"You've brought us out on a wild-goose chase to-night, all right," said the fellow, again.

He was entering the cab as he spoke.

His companion followed him.

"I can't believe they have gone out," said Bob again. "Why, they had just gone in, and I wasn't five minutes."



The cab door slammed and the two detectives drove off. They were angry because the boy had put them to a little trouble.

Further than that, they were jealous of the boy. He had made a record in a week that made them green with envy.

Bob stood still where they left him.

He did not know what to think.

He was as sure as anything that his quarry was in the building.

Suddenly it occurred to him that he knew the password now.

He had heard what the detectives said when they rang for admittance.

He glanced around the neighborhood.

There was a tailor's shop on the other side of the way.

A light burned in the window.

In a minute he was over there, ringing the bell sharply.

A mild-faced German came to the door.

Bob stepped inside of the doorway and out of the light before he made known his errand.

Then he told the tailor an astonishing story.

It was that he had fought a mad dog, and his coat was badly torn. He was carrying it on his arm at the time, and had thrown it over the brute's head.

This accounted for the rents being all in the lining.

He took off his coat as he spoke and turned it inside out.

The honest tailor took one look at it, and threw up both hands in horror.

"Mein Gott! Vat a narrow escape!" he cried excitedly.

"Can you do it while I wait?" asked "The Shadow" innocently.

Once more the German's hands went up, and he burst out laughing.

"Nein! Nein! I mend dose goat der-morrer, mein frient! Ich habe nein sewing-machine vat sew like lightning eggspresses!"

"Then I'll have to wait; but what'll I do for a coat?" asked Bob anxiously. "Will you loan me one, or sell me one, or give me one, professor?"

"I gif you one, you leaf deposit von tollar," said the German affably.

He took a coat down from a nail as he spoke.

Bob eyed it critically.

It was a very good garment.

It was a little out of style, but it would make him look at least two years older.

This was what he wanted, so he paid the dollar willingly.

As he left the shop he told the tailor when to expect him.

It was almost dawn, when he was in the vicinity of the Van Buren Street Station, that a woman brushed past him, carrying a shawl-strap and hand-bag.

He recognized her instantly.

It was May McFarland.

There was a ticket in her hand.

She was leaving the city.

In an instant he recalled what she had said about going to New York. He glanced sharply around the waiting-room.

There was not a sign of Edmunds. There was a crush of people at the gate.

An Indiana "hoosier," with his family, were trying to get through. They were loaded down with baggage, and had misplaced their tickets. This would delay the passage of every one for a minute.

Bob darted across the waiting-room and up to a man in plain clothing. "Hello, Barney!" he said, in a low voice. "I'm Bob, 'The Shadow,' from headquarters. The young fellow that murdered Ada Sterling on the *Lake Breeze* last night is going through that gate! We must stop her!"

"Her! I thought you said it was a young man!"

"No; it's a woman; but that don't matter! Think quick, Barney! We've got to stop her!"

They had both moved forward. Bob pointed out the woman.

At just that minute she looked back over her shoulder.

Bob doubled up his fist and hit the detective a punch.

Barney returned it.

Miss McFarland gave them a quick glance, and looked relieved. They had made her believe that they were fooling together.

The next minute she passed her ticket to the gateman to be punched.

As the fellow took it Barney whispered to Bob and then darted away.

Bob made a lunge forward, and struck the gateman's elbow.

Of course, he dropped the ticket, and nipped his fingers, as well.

Bob excused himself and ducked for the bit of paste-board.

He was a full minute in finding it.

The gateman and several of the passengers cursed him.

When he finally found the ticket he grinned with satisfaction.

Barney was on the rear of the crowd, with a ticket in his hand.

He was going to accompany Miss May McFarland.

Bob left the station, whistling.

It was half-past five.

At ten minutes to six he was in the chief's office.

The sergeant looked cross and scowled when he saw him.

At the same time he glanced at the clock uneasily.

"It's all right, sergeant! The *Lake Breeze* can go without me!" said Bob promptly.

The sergeant stared.

Bob told his story rapidly. When it was done the sergeant sent out a few quick orders.

"I'll send a warrant to Barney as soon as possible," he said, smiling. "Now, all we have to do is to catch Loren Edmunds."

Bob dropped into a chair.

The sergeant took a sharp look at him, and sent out for some coffee.

Bob was drinking his coffee when Greenleaf came in.

He had obeyed his order to allow the *Lake Breeze* to go on her way without him.

"We have all of the suspects now except Edmunds," explained the sergeant. "And among four robbers we shall surely find one murderer."

"I am sure of it," said Bob, who was greatly refreshed by his coffee. "And now, if you say so, sergeant, I'm off after Edmunds."

The sergeant looked at him admiringly.

He was plucky, indeed.

Nothing seemed to daunt his fearless spirit.

It was Greenleaf who spoke next. "Of course, Edmunds will follow the woman."

Bob burst out laughing.

"Nixey! Not on your tintype!" he said quickly. "He's dead tired of her society. He'll go in the opposite direction!"

"The boy is right," said the sergeant.

Then he sent out more orders. Every outgoing train was to be watched by a double force of detectives.

"We'll catch him, if he attempts to leave town. And he'll try it before night," he said decidedly.

A moment later the chief came in. He had stopped at the hospital on his way to the office.

Decker was greatly improved. He would be on duty the next day.

This news delighted Bob, for he was very fond of Decker.

The chief listened to a recital of Bob's experiences.



He was disgusted with the two detectives who had gone to Bob's assistance.

He would make them feel cheap when he had the opportunity.

"Then, if there is nothing special for me to do this morning, I'll go back and get my coat," said Bob, later. The chief gave his consent.

He even patted Bob on the shoulder. "Then go home, my boy, and get some rest," he said kindly. "You can't expect to live without sleep, even if you are a detective."

Bob straightened himself up. There was fire in his eye.

"I don't mean to go to sleep until that rascal is caught, chief!" he said firmly. "I'd have nightmare if I did, so I might just as well not try it!"

"All right, then, Bob," said the great man, smiling. "You may go right on with your search for the culprit. Use your own clues, my boy, and act on your own judgment."

Several wires had been jingling while the great man talked.

They were the reports of detectives of various ferries and stations. Other crooks were being located, but there was no sign of Edmunds. Since Bob saw him enter the gambling-den he seemed to be swallowed up in mystery.

"He hasn't been at home since he returned from Manistee," said the chief, reading from a letter.

"And, of course, his friends are half-crazy!" suggested Greenleaf.

"On the contrary."

The chief's voice was sarcastic as he made the reply.

Then he went on and explained the situation.

"When a man is down, his friends are the first to jump on him, you know, Greenleaf. Well, this fellow's friends are no exception."

"You mean they have turned against him?"

"Yes. They are telling everything that they can think of to the fellow's discredit."

"How kind of them!" muttered Greenleaf.

Bob looked disgusted.

"Of course, it helps us," went on the chief. "I find he has been mixed up in many shady transactions. Last night was not his first visit to Terry's cellar!"

"Oh, chief!"

Bob spoke impulsively. He could not help it.

He had suddenly remembered the coming raid at Terry's.

"What is it, Bob?"

The chief smiled kindly.

"Will you please let me go with the men when they raid Terry's, chief?"

Bob's eyes were shining.

He could almost see the fun.

It was all he could do to wait for the chief's answer.

"You shall certainly go, Bob. It will take place at midnight to-night. You deserve the pleasure of seeing the place raided."

Five minutes later he left the office. "The Shadow" was off on a "still hunt" after the fellow Edmunds.

## CHAPTER XXI.

### MORE NEWS.

The day passed slowly.

Bob got his coat from the German. It was so neatly mended that he hardly knew it.

He gave him back the coat he had borrowed and another dollar.

When he was safely outside of the shop he ripped out all of the stitches.

Those rags were a part of his stock in trade.

In other words, he needed them in his business.

His efforts to locate Edmunds had all been fruitless.

It was with a sad heart that he betook himself to the chief's office at nine that evening.

The first man that he met in the central office was Decker.

The two stood for five minutes and shook hands with each other. Decker was as white as a ghost, but he was as nervy as ever.

He had begged to be allowed to join the raid on Terry's. Greenleaf came in next.

He had some news to tell.

The "dago" deck-hand had weakened through the day.

The detectives had given him the "third degree," and the results were startling.

What he had told was for the chief's ear alone.

It was for that dignitary to impart it according to his wisdom.

"How is the purser getting on?" asked Bob, with a grin.

"He's as silent as the grave," was Greenleaf's answer.

"No danger of that fellow doing any squealing."

"Yet he told me he was sure that the young fellow in the next stateroom did the job," said Decker.

"And the 'young fellow' was a girl," said Bob thoughtfully.

Decker patted Bob on the back.

"It took you to find it out," he said kindly.

"Yes; we fellows have been almighty slow," was Greenleaf's answer. "That McFarland woman has been here a month, and not one of us have ever laid eyes on her."

"She poses as a widow, I find, and has kept very close," said another detective, coming in.

The chief was right behind him.

He was smiling brightly.

"I have just received a description of 'Mormon May,'" he began. "Did any of you men ever hear of such a woman?"

Decker pricked up his ears.

"I heard of her once. It was about three years ago."

He began racking his brains for further information.

"The chief at Salt Lake City has just written me a letter," went on the chief. "He describes her as decidedly mannish in appearance. Further, he says she is at her best in a frock coat and silk hat. She dresses first as a man, and then as a woman."

"And where does she get the name?" asked Greenleaf.

The chief laughed.

"She poses first as Mr. So-and-So, and then as the wife of Mr. So-and-So. She has so many husbands and wives in this way that they call her a Mormon."

"And what is her peculiarity?"

"A sneak-thief, pure and simple. She was measured in Salt Lake by the Bertillon system, but the central office there never got a good picture. That is why her face is not in our collection."

"Then she has done time?" asked Decker quickly.

"A year," was the chief's answer. He was about to add more, when Decker broke in impulsively:

"Then that is where I saw her! It was in a station-

house at Salt Lake. She was lined up with a batch of criminals, and one of the men pointed her out to me. Now, why the mischief didn't I know her when I saw her in that restaurant?"

The old detective looked chagrined. He was disgusted with his memory. Of all things a detective prides himself on his memory of faces.

"She has probably changed greatly in three years," said the chief consolingly. "You will know her the next time you see her, Mr. Decker."

"You bet I will!"

"And will take a picture of her that will be correct," laughed the chief. "They haven't our methods out in Salt Lake City."

The detectives all laughed.

There was some joke in this.

Bob's eyes opened wider, but he did not ask any questions.

They began planning the raid on Terry's.



Orders flew in all directions.

A posse of bluecoats were ordered to be in readiness.

Six detectives from headquarters were also assigned to the job.

Bob was highly elated when he found he was one of them.

A few minutes before it was time to start the chief received a message from Barney.

The McFarland woman had reached Buffalo.

He had her under cover.

All he needed now was a warrant to bring her back to Chicago.

"He'll get that in an hour," said the chief, consulting his watch. "It went out on the next train on the Michigan Southern."

"Then she's as good as bagged," said Decker thankfully.

"I don't envy Barney his job to bring her back," laughed Greenleaf.

"One of our men is in Buffalo. I have wired him to assist in escorting the lady," was the chief's jovial answer.

A few minutes later the central office looked deserted.

There were two sergeants at their desks, but that was all.

Not a spare man could have been found on the premises.

Chicago was having its fill of crime.

There seemed to be robberies and murders in every direction.

As Bob and Greenleaf walked together, they talked in low voices. They were moving slowly in the direction of Terry's cellar.

The others had been sent in various directions.

Uniformed men were to "keep dark" and display at safe distances.

Plain-clothes men were to go singly, or, at most, in twos.

No one was to enter the place until after midnight.

The chief's aim was to capture Terry himself, if he could.

"The Shadow," in return, had it in for the two crooks who had sand-bagged Decker. Still, he felt assured that they would come in for their full measure of punishment. They had already suffered a little at the hands of the detectives.

As they walked along, both Greenleaf and Bob had their eyes open for Edmunds.

They peered into every open door and uncurtained window. As they sauntered on, Greenleaf grew confidential.

He had the chief's permission to tell the news that he had gathered.

"We have the description of the young man that Edmunds talked with in Manistee," he began.

"And does it tally with the description of the one who occupied the stateroom?"

"Exactly. According to the deck-hand's statements."

"Then he saw him!"

"Yes; he acted as 'lookout' that night."

"A good chain of evidence!" mused Bob.

"We have more."

"What is it, Greenleaf?"

"The fellow was seen to come ashore at South Haven."

"Did he meet Loren Edmunds?"

"He did an hour later. Then Edmunds left him at a hotel and came to this city."

"And the young man?"

"No one saw him after that. He mystified the hotel clerk completely. Of course, we can understand it."

"Yes. He turned into a woman."

"Exactly."

"Then the chain is complete."

"Yes; every link is there. The only thing now is to find out which of the three did it."

"Edmunds has saved his neck by not being on the boat."

The detective shrugged his shoulders.

"Yes, the dirty cur! He has saved his own life by forfeiting a woman's!"

"You think she did it?"

Greenleaf shook his head.

He was about to reply, when Decker's whistle sounded.

Bob answered it instantly.

The next moment the old detective joined them.

There was a whispered consultation, and then the three parted company.

They were now within three blocks of the famous den.

When a neighboring clock struck twelve each was swallowed up in darkness. Only the measured tread of one lone officer could be heard in the distance.

Bob was crouching behind the pile of lumber in the vacant lot where he and Decker had found the bracelet.

He fondled a new pistol lovingly as he listened for the signal agreed upon.

It was wonderful how good company improved his nerve. Yet he had the satisfaction of knowing that he had not played the coward even when the odds were decidedly against him. As he strained his ears, the signal sounded.

Bob left his ambush and crept along toward the low building.

As he reached the door of the alley he was joined by Decker. They made their way softly toward the door at the other end of the alley.

The door opened as easily as ever.

They were once more in Terry's.

## CHAPTER XXII.

### THE CAPTURE.

The place was deserted.

There was not so much as a rag-picker in sight.

Only one lantern flickered in the place, and that hung from a hook in the ceiling.

Decker took a sharp glance around. A cry of annoyance crossed his lips.

"They've been warned, as usual!" he said disgustedly.

Bob moved farther into the room. He was peering around cautiously.

"There's not a soul in sight. Perhaps they are in the cellar," he said softly.

A slight noise behind them made them both turn instantly.

Some one had slid from behind a pile of rags and was locking the heavy door.

The detectives recognized him at a glance.

It was Terry.

Decker drew his revolver and covered the fellow.

Bob gave another sharp glance about the room.

The scene had changed like magic.

A dozen hideous faces appeared above the piles of rags.

The faces were followed by hands, all holding weapons.

Several revolvers were aimed at the detectives.

Bob's heart nearly stopped beating. They had been cleverly deceived.

The detectives outside could not get in for some minutes.

In the meantime, he and Decker could be riddled with bullets.

Decker's brain worked fast.

He dropped his weapon instantly, and threw up both hands.

Bob followed suit, although he did not want to.

A hoarse snarl from Terry came next.

He ordered them to the cellar.

As he did so, some one kicked on the door and bawled for admittance.

"Chase de spies!"

"Kill de sneaks!"



"Run 'em inter de cellar, Terry!" were cries that came from inside.

Terry hesitated a minute.

The kicking on the door continued.

The fiends in the room had closed in now.

They were surrounding the two detectives in a circle.

"Kill de detectives!" growled the ruffians again.

They flourished their weapons almost under their noses.

It was all taking place in a minute of time.

Bob was wondering why they did not shoot, when he heard the crack of a revolver.

A bullet whistled by his ear.

He tried to look at Decker.

The next minute a score of clawlike hands seized him.

They began dragging him toward the steps that led to the cellar.

"The Shadow" forgot everything and fought like a tiger.

He could hear Decker doing the same.

It was a rough scrimmage.

The pounding on the door was increased at a whistle from Decker.

A minute later there were reports from a dozen revolvers.

The heavy door had given way with a crash.

Bob knocked out three Italians with three blows and turned to help Decker.

As he did so, he saw a line of bluecoats forcing their way into the place.

What followed was done so quickly that it seemed almost incredible.

Every man but two in the room disappeared under the rags.

The two who remained were lying on the floor, unconscious.

The posse of policemen and detectives pounced upon the rags. They kicked the bundles to one side.

There were a lot of holes in the floor under them.

The rascals had actually dropped through these holes into the darkness of the cellar.

The detectives and bluecoats stared at each other.

They were amazed, but not at all dismayed at the proceeding.

Every outlet to the cellar was carefully guarded.

"Now, we've got 'em like so many rats in a trap!" said the sergeant in charge of the posse.

"Let's burn 'em out!" suggested one of the men. "It would serve them right! They are little better than vermin."

"We'll starve them out. That will be better," laughed the sergeant.

"Only it will take too long," suggested Decker. "I want to see the finish of this battle, sergeant."

"I thought I saw our finish a minute ago," laughed Bob. "Gee! But that was a close call, wasn't it, Mr. Decker?"

"It was, indeed! I don't understand why they didn't fire. Terry must have had some worse fate awaiting us in the cellar."

He stopped speaking suddenly.

A cry from the officer at the door had startled him.

The bluecoat had darted out into the alley.

He was back in a second, dragging a hideous creature.

It was "Old Moll."

Decker and Bob both recognized her instantly.

The old woman was so drunk that she looked more wretched than ever.

"She's the one that swiped the diamond bracelet!" exclaimed Bob.

The detectives eyed her while they consulted together.

"She's lost to the world," said Decker, as he saw the old hag stagger.

The next minute she fell over a bundle of rags and began snoring loudly.

The sergeant detailed three men to remain on guard in the room, then the rest went out on a tour of inspection.

Decker, Greenleaf, and Bob were the three who remained. While they were waiting for signals from the outside they began inspecting the premises.

There was not a sound from the men below.

The detectives moved every bundle of rags and piled them up in one corner.

Then they lighted the rest of the lanterns in the place.

They could now see each hole in the floor distinctly.

If a hand appeared above the floor, they knew what to do.

They did not anticipate any such action on the part of their prisoners.

The minutes passed.

It was growing monotonous.

As Bob passed "Old Moll" he glanced at her indifferently.

He was astonished to see that her eyes were open, in spite of the fact that she was snoring.

Decker and Greenleaf were patrolling the other side of the room, so Bob walked up and stared at the old creature.

The next minute something happened that nearly took his breath away.

The woman signified by a gesture that she had something to tell him. Bob moved nearer to the bundle of rags.

He was more than suspicious.

He felt sure there would be some treachery.

But the old woman stopped snoring and said something in a hoarse whisper.

What she said was this:

"The sphalpeen ye do be afther is in ther sullar there, an', faith, it's ol' Moll herself who'll be doin' ye the favor to tell ye!"

"Who the deuce do you mean?" asked Bob, going nearer. The old woman shut her eyes and began snoring again.

It was evident that she thought a word to the wise was sufficient.

Bob and Decker had both recovered their revolvers.

Bob drew his from his pocket now and snapped it over the old creature's head.

"Talk fast, my good woman! Who do you mean?" he asked, in a businesslike voice.

Decker and Greenleaf came over to see what was going on.

The old woman opened her eyes angrily.

The next minute she saw the weapon. Her hand traveled to the folds in her ragged gown.

When she drew it out Bob fully expected to see a dirk, or knife of some kind.

Instead, the old creature held up a bit of paper.

"Faith, if yez must have it, ye may!" she said, in her cracked voice. "Sure, the dood wor afther drappin' it w'en he came ther avenin' wid his gold an' joels fer de loikes av Terry! Bad luck to the pair av thim!"

Bob seized the paper.

It was a railroad ticket.

He grabbed the old woman by the shoulder and shook her vigorously.

"Quick! Where is he? Where is the dude that dropped that ticket?" he asked.

The old hag began to cry.

"Ye'll not sind me up if I tells ye?" she begged. "Ye'll pity the loikes av a poor owld crayther wot never did harum to—"

"Oh, shut up! Where is he?" cried Bob, with another shake.

A hideous noise followed the question. The old hag's teeth chattered. She knew that the raid was on, indeed. There was a perfect bedlam of noise issuing from the cellar. Greenleaf knelt on one knee and covered the most of the holes. Decker busied himself binding the hands of the two men, who were coming to their senses.

Bob crossed the room, with his revolver cocked.



He was headed for the stairway that he knew was back of the partition.

The next second he heard a yell of victory in the cellar. Then a step sounded on the stairs, and a man bounded around the partition.

He was as white as death.

His eyes were bulging.

Three feet from the top of the stairs he looked into the barrel of Bob's revolver.

As the young detective bawled "Halt!" he stood stock-still.

The fellow was no other than Loren Edmunds.

A minute later the entire posse came up the stairs.

Every man in the lot was accompanied by a prisoner.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

### THE "LINE-UP."

The detectives had tricked the rascals by a well-known ruse.

They had made what is known as a "stool-pigeon" out of one of their own number.

This fellow was one of the spies whom they caught on the outside.

At the point of a pistol, he promised to betray his companions.

He led the way into the cellar, and the detectives followed like shadows. They were thus able to surprise and capture the entire number.

Bob took charge of Edmunds as his special prisoner.

As they were all marching to the station-house, Edmunds tried to bribe the young detective.

"I'll give you a thousand dollars to let me escape!" he whispered, as they reached a dark corner.

They were a little behind the others, but Edmunds wore a pair of nippers, so Bob was not afraid of losing him.

"I suppose you want to live to murder another woman?" retorted Bob.

The fellow feigned ignorance.

"What do you mean?"

Bob grinned in his face.

"I overheard your conversation with May McFarland last night in her apartments."

"The devil you did!"

The fellow's jaw dropped as he heard the news.

"Yes; and I followed you to that gambling-den afterward."

The culprit stared at him.

"And Miss McFarland has been bagged in Buffalo," went on Bob mercilessly.

The man's eyes were bulging and his breath came faster.

"Oh, you are a precious pair!" went on Bob; "and the purser of the *Lake Breeze* is a dandy! It only took the four of you to murder that one woman!"

"I was not on the *Breeze*! I know nothing about it!" whispered Edmunds.

His tongue was so thick he could hardly stutter.

"Oh, well, that don't matter! We'll tell you all about it when you get to the station-house," said Bob affably.

Edmunds walked on in silence for a minute.

They were falling behind the others. He was a desperate man now. He determined on one more chance for liberty.

He suddenly tripped.

As his hands were pinioned, he could not save himself.

He fell heavily on Bob and nearly knocked him over.

The next second he recovered himself like a cat.

He raised both of his manacled hands and made a jump at Bob. It was done so quickly that "The Shadow" hardly knew what happened. He felt a blow on his cheek that nearly stunned him.

As he ducked to avoid another, he caught the fellow by the legs.

They both went down in the mud together.

The next second two of the detectives came running back.

Bob was on top.

He was pummeling Edmunds like a good fellow.

After that they kept together the rest of the way.

Bob tied up his cheek in a handkerchief.

The handcuffs had made quite a cut in it.

Bob did not wait to see what happened at the station-house after the prisoners were lodged there. He went to a doctor at once and had his face attended to.

The next morning he was on hand when the prisoners were "lined up."

Terry was there, too.

Decker had caught him.

He was by far the sorriest-looking wretch of the collection.

A little later some one brought in "Old Moll."

She had been found by one of the officers asleep in Terry's cellar.

A few hours later four prisoners were marched into the "assembly-room" at the central office.

They were "lined up" on the platform just in front of the Rogues' Gallery. Every idle detective in the department came in and had a look at them. They were Loren Edmunds, May McFarland, the purser of the *Lake Breeze*, and the "dago" deck-hand. Four more frightened mortals were never seen.

The detectives put the "screws" on and extorted some statements from each.

Then they easily put these bits of information together.

The purser had entered the stateroom with "Mormon May" by means of a false key.

They awoke Miss Sterling.

Instantly her hand slipped under her pillow for the revolver she always carried.

The purser sprang forward and tried to stifle her with a pillow.

She struggled fiercely.

In a moment of fury he drove a knife into her heart.

"Mormon May" rifled the stateroom of all its valuables.

The deck-hand who was acting as "lookout" helped to drag her body through the window and dropped it into the lake.

The knife fell with it.

He received one hundred dollars and the purser five hundred. Then "Mormon May" left the boat at South Haven.

It was presumed that she and Edmunds divided the rest of the plunder.

After the four were locked up in separate cells, the detectives searched the McFarland woman's apartments.

They found quantities of plunder of every description, among which were several of Miss Sterling's jewels.

The friends of Loren Edmunds came to the front once more.

They were sorry for him now, and called him "Poor Loren."

They sent flowers to his cell, and hundreds of women wrote him letters.

But the attentions bestowed upon him did not lighten his



sentence. He was sent up for the longest time that could be given an accomplice in murder.

May McFarland also got twenty years.

The purser was sentenced to the gallows as the actual murderer, while the "dago" received a light sentence, because of his ignorance.

Thus the mystery of the lake steamer was solved at last.

Bob had the satisfaction of knowing that he had helped to solve it.

He had done the most important work upon the case, and in only one instance had fortune favored him.

That was when the proprietor of the gambling-den had him dropped at the depot.

Bob chuckled over that every time he thought of it.

But a detective has very little time to spend in thinking over one case. He is no sooner relieved of one responsibility when he must assume another.

Bob gave the chief some information about Martin's gambling-house which led to a raid there, also.

Martin himself was "sent up" for his practise of protecting criminals.

"You have another feather in your cap, Bob," the chief said to him one day.

"The Shadow" grinned.

He was not afraid of the chief now.

As he took off his blue cap and looked at it there was a twinkle in his eye.

"If you don't mind, chief, you might make it a button," he said slyly. "I can't say I'm particularly fond of feathers."

"All right, Bob! Sew on another button, if you wish," laughed the chief. "You shall have one for every case in which you win a victory."

He handed Bob two gold buttons as he spoke.

Bob took the hint and removed the little ones from his cap.

The next time Decker saw him he pointed to his decorations. "I'm one of you now, old man!" he said gleefully. "I've earned my buttons!"

And Bob went on "earning buttons" from that day.

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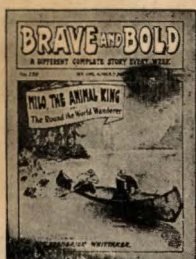
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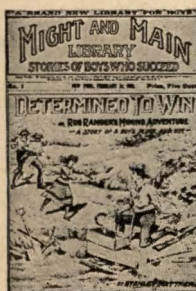


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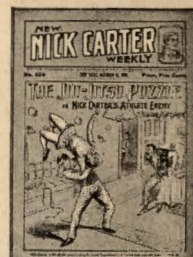


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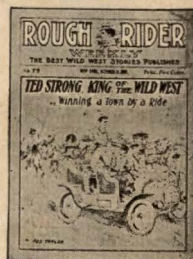
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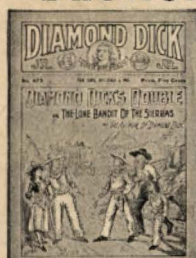
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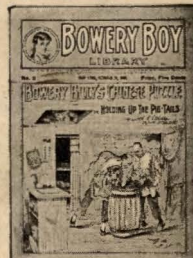
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